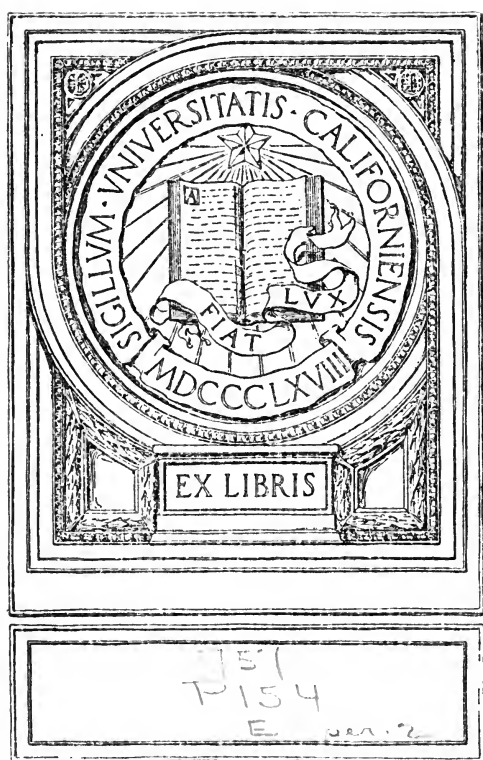


A · HUNDRED · VOICES

BY · KOSTES · PALAMAS



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WORKS BY KOSTES PALAMAS IN THE ORIGINAL TITLES

- Τραγούδια τῆς Πατρίδος μου.¹
 "Ὕμνος εἰς τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν.
 Τὰ Μάτια τῆς Ψυχῆς μου.¹
 "Ιαμβοὶ καὶ Ἀνάπαιστοι.
 Ὁ τάφος.
 Οἱ χαιρετισμοὶ τῆς Ἡλιογέννητης.
 Ἡ Ἀσάλευτη Ζωή.²
 Ὁ Δωδεκάλογος τοῦ Γύφτου.¹
 Ἡ Φλογέρα τοῦ Βασιλιᾶ.
 Ὁ Τάφος. — Ὁ Πρῶτος Λόγος τῶν Παραδείσων.
 Ἡ Πολιτεία καὶ ἡ Μοναξιά.
 Οἱ Καημοὶ τῆς Λιμνοθάλασσης. — Τὰ Σατιρικὰ Γυμνάσματα.
 Βωμοὶ (Πρώτη Σειρά).
 Τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Κρυστάλλου.
 Σολωμός (Βιβλιοθήκη Μαρασλή).
 Γράμματα (Τόμοι 2).
 Ἡρωϊκὰ Πρόσωπα καὶ Κείμενα.
 Ἀριστοτέλης Βαλαωρίτης (Βιβλιοθήκη Ἐκπαιδευτικοῦ Ὁμίλου).
 Τὰ Πρῶτα Κριτικὰ (Βιβλιοθήκη Φέξη).
 Ὁ Βιζυηνὸς καὶ ὁ Κρυστάλλος.
 Ἰούλιος Τυπάλδος.
 Θάνατος Παλληκαριῶ.³
 Τρισεύγενη (ἔκδοσις Α' καὶ Β').⁴
 Ἡ Ἑλένη τοῦ Βεράρεν.
 Πῶς τραγουδοῦμε τὸ θάνατον τῆς Κόρης.
 Τὰ Παράκαιρα.
 Τὰ Δεκατετράστιχα (ἔκδοσις «Γραμμάτων»)
 Διηγήματα.

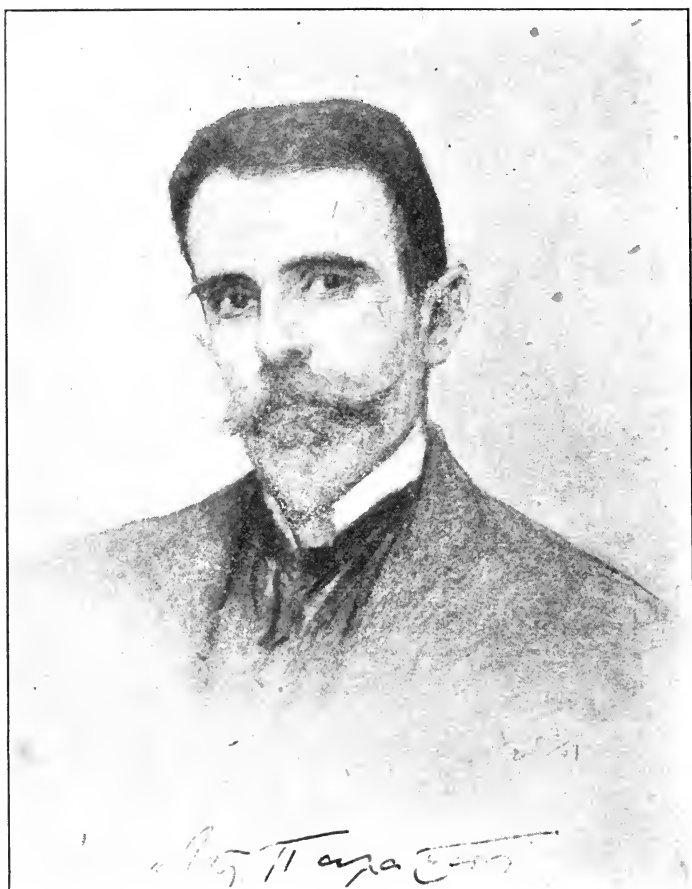
¹ Out of print.

² Translated by Aristides E. Phoutrides in two volumes, Harvard University Press, 1919, 1921.

³ Translated by Aristides E. Phoutrides in Modern Greek Stories, Duffield Co., 1920.

⁴ Translated by Aristides E. Phoutrides, but not published.

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A HUNDRED VOICES

AND OTHER POEMS FROM THE SECOND PART OF
"LIFE IMMOVABLE"

By KOSTES PALAMAS

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES BY
ARISTIDES E. PHOUTRIDES



CAMBRIDGE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON: HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1921

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INTRODUCTION

LIFE IMMOVABLE

SECOND PART

*As in all that stir and live
So there is a power in you,
Tyrants, chains, and fates — I feel it —
That transforms you and uplifts you;
And some hand begins to bring you
Nearer to the wings of birds,
And to songs of nightingales.*

From "The Chains."

LIFE IMMOVABLE

SECOND PART

“POETRY has swung back to actuality, to heartiness and lustihood. And most of all, it has returned to democracy . . . a democracy of spirit and a democracy of speech. . . . Our poets are coming back to the oldest and most stirring tongue; they are using a language that is the language of the people. Nor is this a mere revolt from the stilted and aestheticized speech that was the expression of a narrowed and aestheticized vision of life. They have rediscovered the beauty, the dignity, I might almost say the divine core of the casual and commonplace. They are bringing to ordinary speech a new affection and interest, calling forth its natural warmth, its original power.”

With these words Louis Untermeyer describes the advent of the new spirit in American Poetry which has brought about the dethronement of what he aptly terms “cloudy and classical legendry and the intolerable prudience of the Puritans.”¹ Yet with the change of one word they might be used to describe the literary

¹ *The New Era in American Poetry*, by Louis Untermeyer, Henry Holt & Co., 1919, pp. 10-11.

situation in contemporary Greece. Substitute "purists" for "Puritans" and you might put Untermeyer's words in the mouth of Psicharis, or Eftaliotes, or Karkavitsas, or Chatzopoulos, or Palamas without violating any of their feelings.

Here is one way in which the poet of *Life Immovable* proclaims his new faith:

Take me where Karpenesi's highlands are;
Then to the soft sea breeze of Kleisova.
I love Varasova, and always dream
Of you, O mountains high of Rumele
And coastlands of Morea. Virgin world
And strong, give to this weakling strength and soul
And tongue and swiftness, give yourself to him
In all your nakedness and let your offspring
Be a new matchless song for a new Greece.

To every place he mentions in these lines he has given the modern and living name instead of the classical one, which for false classicists and purists is equivalent to treason, as is the stubbornness with which the adherents of the vernacular prefer to learn from the lips of ignorant old peasant women rather than from the books of the wise. On this matter, Palamas is plain spoken:

I have come for you, plain villager.
The tree that spreads thick roots deep in your soul
Brings out a living blossom on your lips,
Your speech.

A victory, however, for the new forces in Greece was not so easy as in America. Classical legendry and Puritanism were dead in actual American life long before American poets showed the effects of this death. Besides, false classicism was only imported and Puritanism was limited to a small part of the country. In Greece the situation was far more serious. People live in the shadow of the Acropolis there, and classicism has been propagated for generations as equivalent to nationalism. A strong sense of patriotism and the teaching of the puristic language in all schools had made even the peasants ashamed of their own speech, and, although they never abandoned it, they were willing to undergo considerable sacrifices in order to lift their children to the high peaks of purism. This explains why the people themselves followed the purists when the followers of the vernacular invaded the field of expression. It took four generations of constant struggle, more than one Whitman as leader, a number of bloody riots, and one national revolution before the government of Venizelos could introduce into the state elementary schools textbooks written in the living speech of Greece. The War of Independence began in 1821. King Constantine was ousted in 1917. The textbooks in the language of the people were placed in the hands of the Greek school

children in 1918. Undoubtedly, this is the most hopeful sign of a renaissance in Greece.¹

Unless we bear in mind the significance of this struggle between the old and the new in Greece, we are likely to grow impatient at the constant fire with which Palamas returns to what may appear a threadbare topic in his works. Among the poems contained in this volume we shall not find many that do not come within the shadow of this struggle. It is reflected in all of the poet's moods and it appears in all its forms from a shout of defiance to a sound of lyric complaint and from a triumphant song to a cry of despair.

A HUNDRED VOICES

"A Hundred Voices," descriptive sketches from a wide world of tangible things and elusive thought, form a collection of short poems without titles, which give a good illustration of the poet's manifold interest in life. Subjective reflection and external observation find a great wealth of sources where song may be born. In spite of their variety there is some sequence throughout the whole series, a strange harmony in a whirlwind of impressions emanating from the vigor with which the

¹ See also "Le poète Costis Palamas et son œuvre," by Phileas Lebesgue, *Les Études Franco-Grecques*, March 1920, pp. 697-705.

poet's personality follows his lyre throughout its otherwise confusing changes from one mood or subject to another. Thus from "man's soul which in all darkness is the greatest darkness," and from the fruitlessness of man's endeavors, "a dream madly pursuing stars," he wanders through the agony of a self-convicted sinner to the faith in a day without sunset or to the lovely picture of a cypress tree "beautiful, sad and silent" which always moves and bends slowly "whether the sky is black or strewn with stars, in blue delight or in a raging storm." In the same way we meet with voices of the past, with the "unstirring lake of the mystic dream," the tempestuous first inroad of "love . . . dragging every passion in his trail and startling as an Atlantic Nymph," songs to the "tongue of humble Hellas, victor over death," idyllic pictures of Attic serenity, passionate offerings to the Muse of Thought, talks with the flowers of the field, dreams of a world beyond Greece, reminiscences of youth, hearty praises of other men of thought, sacred hours of ecstasy, tears on his child's memory, a patriot's warnings and lyric emotions, hymns to emancipated womanhood, fanciful apostrophes to rhythm and rime, and, in short, a wide range of things from sea-foam to starlight and "from mountain to dew." But whether he speaks as an individual or as a national poet,

whether the vistas of the outer world inspire the song or the poet's mood assimilates and absorbs nature, whether he indulges in curbed or unbridled sorrow, the prevailing motive is constant resistance against the forces of evil and faith in the final triumph of thought.

The last Voice with its restrained sadness, the satisfaction it expresses in its struggle for a greater love, and the confidence in the poet's choice of the burning dream strikes the ruling mood of Palamas as we have already seen it in the last of his "Fatherlands," and in the last song of "the Palm Tree":

O sins of weakness, sufferings of flesh,
O wasted youth, and wayward years of manhood,
Dreams robed in white and thoughts of bitter scorn,
Sweet mate, and orphan home, and cruel life,
My hour of death is near. Yet when the hands
Of the black ogress, throttler of the world,
Press me with iron claws, I shall not fear;
Written on me with burning letters, she
Will read: "I loved you well, O Muse of Thought!"

FROM THE HYMNS AND SONGS OF WRATH

The force of resistance is gaining in volume in the "Hymns and Songs of Wrath." Here all signs of despondency fade away. The poet rides on the wings of confident wrath. Instead of being scourged by the world of decay he becomes its destroyer by assailing it

with prophecy and hymn. The first notes he catches from South Africa's struggle for freedom against England, "tamer of continents and races, rider of the wild horses of the sea."

Something great and something beautiful
Something from beyond and far away
Reaches here in waves of lightning flashes
Seeking for itself the crown of song. . . .

Lifted above "the buried bones of a huge broken skeleton" . . . above "the blasphemies of shouting mobs tearing through the sacred air" even above the sky that spreads "like a faint smile on Sirens' lips" over the land of Greece, he greets amidst the roar and clatter of battle and "with the joy of all seabeaten birds" the new breed of war-glad men:

Hymn, rise up to the stars!
Freedom . . .
Has gone on wings of winds and seabirds
Far to a race unknown and humble. . . .
Then with the sunset of the age,
Hail, dawn of virgin and unknown lands! . . .
Welcome the hour! For here is valor,
And here is sacrifice,
And here is glory.
Sufficient is a single heart
For giving birth to history,
A virgin fair and clothed in perfect armor.

But on closer examination this praise to the brave defenders of Transvaal seems to be an awakening song to the poet's own people. The present struggle taking place at the close of the nineteenth century reminds the poet of another struggle for freedom in the beginning of the same century, which brought about the birth of new Greece, the poet's "queen mother of deeds and thoughts," whose awakening had come "like a witching hour in the early dawn."

You woke with all your history!
But see, your history
Is harlot to the men with crafty words;
Your shield, polluted by unholy harpies . . .
But with the sunset of a century,
Dawn comes of souls unsung and savage lands. . . .

Still the love for his motherland is burning:

I am no herald of your palaces . . .
I am my mother's jealous child;
And when no dreams lead me away
A traveller to distant azure lands,
I am a hand that always seeks
To fasten on some fold
Of her imperial purple robe . . .

This love makes him turn with fury on all those who are guilty of disgracing her. In the "Trilogy of Wrath" he assails the monks, "haters of the sun and all that finds delight in sunlight," who turn "gods' temples and

the shining forms of statues into ghosts and tumbling ruins"; he censures the pedantic teachers, "precious blossoms of decay," who before the great masters of the past shake "like wind-beaten leaves upon a tree," and who, at the same time, do not hesitate to lash with the scourge of Zoilus any new creators seeking inspiration where those great masters sought it, "everywhere from the fury of the sea to the faint sound of moths and from mountain to dew." Yet there is some force that shall overcome these "two ogresses, the monk's fury and the teacher's rage. . . ." The poets can still create a kingdom from fragments:

On the lonely trail of loneliness,
I wander on; and as I go, I pick
The shining fragments of the star-eyed thought
Which they have slain. I plant them on my path;
And see, a kingdom rises here; and there,
A paradise; and farther, palaces,
Temples, and mighty castles dragon-guarded;
And all rejoice in one unending day.

With the same spirit, Phemios, forced to sing among
evil men, broods over the day of splendid vengeance
when the rightful master will return. Hugo is praised
above all for his saying that

Words cannot be divided into noble words and vulgar;
They all are flowers for the precious bee of thought.

The Cross of Christ is made to converse "with tranquil gods" and to weave crowns "of the wild olive tree of Attica . . . and of the laurel boughs of Hellas," thus mingling the "cloud of Calvary with the white gleam of Olympus." In "The Great Dream" Greece is warned to "cast the false worship of the past aside and angry to flee towards some unknown God who will be her redeemer and avenger":

There beneath

The ever opened eye of Heaven, look
Face to face on the sun, the charioteer, . . .
And build with your own hands a simple hut . . .
And let the holy sweat of your fair brow
Fall like a rain of magic power to work
Its wonders on the barren earth . . .
. . . and fill your ransomed soul and heart
With the one dream, how to become the mother
Of a new age. . . .

In this Mosaic exaltation he calls upon the humble and lowly of the earth, sings of the god of light and ends with an Olympic hymn to the "ancient and immortal spirit, father pure of all things beautiful and great and true." It is a hymn of prayer that this spirit may reveal itself again amidst the splendor of its own land and sky. There is nothing in this collection to remind us of the clouds of agony that press upon "The

Return" or the "Verses of a Familiar Tune." The poet seems to become master over despair and decay.

"FROM THE GREAT VISIONS" AND
"A FEW MORE SONGS"

With this victory he is ready to face greater visions. The next collection consists of two longer poems: "The Ascræan" and "The Chains." They are the most profound creations in the volume of *Life Immovable*, and reach the climax of the poet's thought. The collection which follows them gives nothing more than what its title signifies, "A Few More Songs," of which some are melodious and pleasing, some are even powerful, but several seem somewhat youthful and indifferent. With "The Great Visions" we realize that we are in the shadow of greatness. The philosophy of "The Ascræan" is expressed in a slow rhythm which is seldom broken by verses of swifter movement. The prevailing line is iambic with seven feet. On the contrary, "The Chains" is composed in shorter verses of trochaic movement which reflect a greater vigor and a stormier imagination. It is the same rhythm which Palamas has adopted for his masterpiece, *The Twelve Words of the Gypsy*. On the other hand, the philosophy contained in the latter work is almost identical with what we find in both

“The Ascræan” and “The Chains.” Only what we have here in germ reaches its full development in the thought of the Gypsy.

A full analysis of “The Ascræan” follows in the essay entitled “Hesiodic Reminiscences in the Ascræan of Kostas Palamas.” In spite of its modernity of thought the poem has a classical setting; it is new wine poured into an old Boeotian cup. But “The Chains” is free of the shadow of the past as far as setting is concerned. Virgil furnished the text for the first poem; the key to “The Chains” is found in the great Puritan poet:

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

As a prelude to the poem we have a vivid picture of a leopard in his cage of iron bars, who never seems to be aware of his captivity:

And his savage form was beautiful
With the beauty of the seawaves
And a night with lightning flashes
And a black night stripped of stars.

Thence we are transferred to the prison of humanity and follow the dreams of one of the prisoners, “the best of them all in the jailer’s heart.” Without knowing the reason for his captivity, he is deprived of his freedom and is led in bonds by the Blackman, who seems to be Fate, whether of circumstance or volition, to the prison:

A monstrous castle
Built of marble, bronze, and gold.
And the world from stone to thought . . .
Made the monstrous castle . . .
Yet the castle was in chains
All around and all around
As the Blackman had me bound
With the iron chains . . .

In other words, just as through the tyranny of our own fate we are in bondage, so the world of our choice is a castle closed to the sunlight of life and bound with the iron chains which convention, the past, false voices of beauty, and confusion of values have forged.

Dampened sorrow, pallid green,
Dripped within and warped its walls;
And the night-bats flapped about . . .
And the chains within their metal
Kept imprisoned every sound
Till the sounds became a song . . .

This song of the chains is the beginning of grace. The prisoner hears it and speaks to his chains:

As all things that move and live
From the heaven's stars to worms,
So a will transforms you, too;
Tyrants though you be,
Something now begins within you
And becomes by slow degrees
Bloom and nightingale . . .

The realization of this new aspect of bondage is a new impetus for rising to the light of true life. Then follows the slow initial progress with the light of the three lamps, Charity and Help and Love. He speaks words of hope to the other slaves to whom he has come "a pale ghost of a sunbeam." Then he comes to a bit of land with a glimpse of turquoise blue above it and high walls about it; and with his hands he tills the barren plot till it becomes "a garden fairer than the home of some newly wedded lovers." Thus he breathes again and raises up his hands in silent prayer "with his will asleep." At the instigation of the Blackman he sees a skylight high on one of the sheer walls, and dragging himself and his chains up the monstrous ladder that leads from the ground to the skylight, he looks out and sees:

. . . skies without an end,
. . . seas without a shore;
And the air was cool and lovely;
And the light was sweet with play,
And the dawn was princess born,
Of a mother queen, the spring. . . .

There is freedom undefiled in a land "where cares are dead and life is God at play . . ."

And the lips of men were sealed
With the guileless smile of children;

And their souls with thoughts of heroes;
And beside them bright and mighty
Like archangels stood their mates,
Like sky-roamers upon earth . . .

This great vision he announces to the hosts of slaves who lie in the castle till the chains of all answer with their own distinct song. The last lines of the poem are optimistic to the point of being evangelical:

As in all that stir and live
So there is a power in you,
Tyrants, chains, and fates — I feel it —
That transforms you and uplifts you;
And a hand begins to bring you
Nearer to the wings of birds
And to songs of nightingales . . .

This is many a mile distant from the first verses of *Life Immovable*. We feel that we have travelled through a sea of sadness and uncertainty to a land of assurance and joy. Yet the germ was there at the very start. We have nothing here but the fulfillment of a promise — a life triumphant, immovable.

NEW YORK,
June, 1920.

HESIODIC REMINISCENCES IN THE "ASCRAEAN" OF KOSTES PALAMAS¹

THE "Ascraean" of Kostas Palamas constitutes the first part of the "Great Visions," which appeared in 1904 in the volume entitled *Life Immovable*.² The poem, consisting of six hundred and fifty-six verses, is most expressive of the thought and art of Palamas, and forms a prelude to his masterpiece, *The Twelve Words of the Gypsy*.³ The speaker of the poem is the Ascraean Hesiod, who returning "from the endless journey, from the lands one only enters but can never leave" meets the poet of Modern Greece in the sunlight of the upper world. He calls on the "old life song" to be his guide again, and reveals his identity by contrasting himself with Homer:

The blind Olympian bard, the child divine
Of Meles, sings in tranquil strains of men,
Heroes and gods; but from a restless fountain,
My song flows restlessly, a song that is
The flaming lava and the surging sea.

A bard from Ascra's fields, I am no master
Of golden dreams of calm, or radiant songs,

¹ Reprinted from the *Classical Journal*, vol. xii, no. 3, December 1916.

² The Greek titles are 'Ἀσκραῖος, 'Ἀπὸ τὰ Μεγάλα 'Οράματα, 'Ἡ 'Ἀσάλενη Ζωή.

³ 'Ο Δωδεκάλογος τοῦ Γύφτου.

No! The black earth I tread, drags me with power
 Magnetic; my spirit travels on the wings
 Of sighs. Hills, know I am the faithful friend
 Of the gentle ewe; a tiller of the soil,
 I furrow, sow, and sweat . . .
 My song is loneliness; my joy, the plough;
 The waves of wheatfields mingle with my rhythms . . .

Then in words that give the substance of a Hesiodic passage of the *Works and Days*¹ expressed in strains of a deeper lyricism, he speaks of his origin:

On my primeval land, the jackals howled,
 The jackals of the wilderness amidst
 My fathers' graceless lives; and graceless were
 The soft-blown coastlands of Aeolia.
 On open seas sailors of Cyme drove us;
 On ports unknown sailors of Cyme cast us:
 Here the cicala sang; the hawthorn bloomed;
 And, a storm-beaten orphan, I sought rest
 In laughless summers and in winters fierce,
 Where, at the sacred mountain's root lay Ascrea
 Darkling; from there, I took this graceless voice
 And harsh. My food was need and bitter care
 Instead of the sweet milk of Muses' breasts.

¹ (vv. 633-640). ὥσπερ ἐμός τε πατήρ καὶ σός, μέγα νήπιε Πέρση,
 πλωτίζεσκ' ἐν νηυσὶ βίου κεχρημένος ἐσθλοῦ·
 ὅς ποτε καὶ τῆδ' ἦλθε πολὺν διὰ πόντον ἀνίσσας,
 Κύμην Αἰολίδα προλιπών, ἐν νητὶ μελαίνῃ·
 οὐκ ἄφενος φεύγων οὐδὲ πλοῦτόν τε καὶ ὄλβον,
 ἀλλὰ κακὴν πενίην, τὴν Ζεὺς ἀνδρεσσὶ δίδωσι.
 νᾶσσατο δ' ἄγχι' Ἑλικῶνος οἰζυρῇ ἐνὶ κώμῃ,
 "Ἀσκρι, χεῖμα κακῇ, θέρει ἀργαλήν, οὐδὲ ποτ' ἐσθλῇ.

Then follows a passage inspired by the opening verses of the *Theogony*. In the old poem, the Muses appear before the shepherd bard at night, ἐννύχαιαι.¹ In the "Ascraean," the divine visitation takes place in full daylight, but a nightly gloom is suggested by exterior loneliness and internal brooding:

But in the desert dale and secret, once
In daylight, as the black dreams browsed within me
And the white sheep grazed in the fields about me,
There stood before my eyes nine goddesses,
Offspring of a bright world of mystery,
The sisters dwelling upon Helicon.

In the *Theogony*, the Muses "dwelling on the great and holy mountain of Helicon, dance with delicate feet about the violet colored spring . . . and bathe their tender bodies in the streams of Termessos, or of Hippocrene, or of sacred Holmeius."² These streams have given the modern poet the source of his great vision.

¹ *Theog.* v. 10.

² *Theog.* vv. 1 ff. Μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' αἰεῖδεν,
αἴθ' Ἑλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα ζάθεόν τε
καί τε περὶ κρήνην ἰοειδέα πόσσ' ἀπαλοῖσιν
ὀρχεῦνται καὶ βωμὸν ἑρισθενέος Κρονίωνος·
καί τε λοεσσάμεναι τέρενα χροά Τερμησσοῖο,
ἢ Ἴππου κρήνης, ἢ Ὀλμειοῦ ζαθέιο,
ἀκροτάτῳ Ἑλικῶνι χοροὺς ἐνεποιήσαντο
καλοῖς, ἱμερόεντας· ἐπερρώσαντο δὲ ποσσίν.
ἔνθεν ἀπορνύμεναι, κεκαλυμμένοι ἤερι πολλῇ,
ἐννύχαιαι στείχον περικαλλέα ὄσαν ἰεῖσαι . . .

Light and water are elements in which he likes to revel, a tendency that should appear very natural to all those who have visited the light-flooded and sea-embraced country of Greece:

Waters about and waters everywhere:
 Rivers and cataracts and lakes and fountains,
 Ravines and springs and gentle rivulets;
 All-tranquil singers, criers thunder-voiced,
 Waters that slumber wakelessly and other
 Swift-flowing waters loud and revelling.
 And from the water-glad green crypts and vaults
 Where rocks are spanned into virgin crystal gates
 Revealing sights invisible to men,
 The water sprites! with minds and bodies moulded
 Of cool and sunlit waters undivided;
 And waters were the streaming symphonies
 Of voices manifold that flowed from them . . .
 From them I took the laurel bough I hold,
 And from their hands I ate the laurel fruit,
 And knew the deeds of mortals and of gods,
 And I beheld like now and yesterday
 The seasons of to-morrow. Since that day,
 I am the bard, the wizard, and the prophet.
 A lightning quiverless, my lyre's faint glimmers
 Flash forth. I am the wanderer who wanders
 Forward; the laurel eater who is filled
 With hunger bitter and unquenchable . . .¹

¹ Cf. *Theog.* vv. 22-32. αἰ νύ ποθ' Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδὴν
 ἄρνας ποιμαίνονθ' Ἑλικῶνος ὕπο ζαθέοιο.
 τότε δέ μοι πρῶτιστα θεαὶ πρὸς μῦθον ξείπον,

After this introduction, the main part of the poem begins. Hesiod, measuring once more his past life with his awakening memory, begins his song in a background that transfers us into the light-sea of a Grecian summer and its seething life. "This" he sings, is the hour to begin; for

Now from its husk, full-ripe the corn-ear bursts;
On the grapevine the cluster blushes red;
The fig tree spreads its green leaves to the top;
The north wind droops; the grain-ear bends to earth;
The lip, to the lover's kiss; and there the smoke
Goes writhing snake-like across the boundless sky.
Amid the oak leaves, blithe the cuckoo sings,
And like the silence, its voice lingers on;
And nothing ends and nothing fades away . . .¹

Then he recalls the five ages of man through which he has lived. The ancient poet of the *Works and Days*²

Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.
Ποιμένες ἄγρουλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα μυθήσασθαι.
ὥς ἔφασαν κοῦραι μεγάλου Διὸς ἀρτιέπειαι·
καί μοι σκῆπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθιλέος ὄζον
δρέψασθαι θηητόν· ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδὴν
θεῖην, ὥς κλείοιμι τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ' ἔοντα.

¹ Vv. 109-127-143-156-174-202.

² This passage suggests the verses from the *Shield of Hercules* (398-399) indicating the time of the battle between Cycnus and Hercules:

τῆμος δὴ κέγχροισι πέρι γλῶχες τελέθουσι,
τούστε θέρει σπείρουσιν, ὅτ' ὄμφακες αἰδῶλλονται . . .
τὴν ὥρην μάρναντο . . .

introduces the legend of the Five Ages in order to illustrate his pessimistic view that 'man's life was happier in the remotest past and that, with time, crime and woe have been winning the ascendancy culminating in the present age, the unhappiest of all. With the candor and charm of a child, he speaks of the various ages drifting farther and farther away from joy and peace, the ages which except for the last one have no relation whatever with his own life. He asks us to look on them objectively and accept them as a true report of bygone times, in which we have had no share. Not so with Palamas. With the modern poet of Greece, unity is won through subjectivity. The five ages are not detached from our own lives to the remote past, but they are man's own — at least, the poet's own — experience. The golden age and the silver age, the age of bronze and the age of heroic deeds are just as real parts of our lives as the gloomy age of iron.

Happiness seems to be ascribed to the early period of childhood. With a sentiment not unlike that of Wordsworth in his "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," the Ascræan addresses his soul, to which "all paths, all seas, all storms are open":¹

¹ Cf. Hes. *Works and Days*, vv. 109-127.

O soul within me, ever wandering,
The gold-wrought world before me rose and cut
My passage as a tranquil lake; and I
Came to the godlike dwellers of gold realms,
Whom the immortals made with joy, just as
A mighty maker free from passion makes
Even immortals — *dreams of a white rock,*
The breathings of his might, and images
Of his own soul. —

Tranquilly they were born,
Tranquilly blossomed, withered tranquilly.
The fathers reigned, the righteous ruled; there was
No longing, wrath, nor hatred. Earth, their slave,
Bestowed her treasures on them steadily;
There was no stooping, digging, nor pursuing;
And golden flowers grew straight upon their foot-prints;
And where they turned, they reaped a golden fruit.
Abundance was their lot. They never knew
Old age, nor pain, nor weariness, nor crime . . .
But from the golden land I wandered on,
A bird that flashes tremulously by
Cutting with darkling lines the azure world,
And even in a gold-wrought world can find
No friendly roof to rest its battered wing . . .

The Age of Silver follows, a period when man seems
still a child and yet is not, and when the awakening of
self-consciousness generates ruthless rebellion against
everything about him without giving him the knowledge
to build. It is the age in which dissatisfied with every

thing about us, past or present, we look upon our former castles as ruined temples of a weary faith, and yet, we neither can nor will take thought of the future. Thus the passing away of an innocent happiness that results from the crushing of old ideals is followed by a mood of blind isolation. A rebel defiance is born in us and grows mysteriously in the dim light of vague, unguided thought. It is a sort of Byronic aloofness and discontent with all things: ¹

The world of Silver,
Where snow-clad forests spread
Beaten by merciless and glaring moonlight
That weaves its crowns of pearl
To crown the heads of mortals wrapped in gloom,
Drunken with poppy seed,
Men whom a dimness born of mystery
Binds with life counterfeit,
A life that drags itself upon the face
Of a deep-yawning cliff.
The shroud of the silver glow reflected wraps
All things from mind to grass,
A light that struggles to become a day
And ever stays at dawn . . .

The poet attempts in vain to raise their ruined altars:

“You who are neither living nor yet dead . . .
What Fury’s victims, what Tartarus’s wrecks

¹ Hes. *Works and Days*, vv. 127-143.

Are you, ill-laid upon a mother's lap
 And ever wild, from your first hair, the blond,
 To your last hair, snow-white. The gods far-seeing,
 Even the Fates, exiled from light, are far
 From you from the beginning; voiceless is
 The mother, who holds you voiceless with a threat . . .
 . . . I come to build anew
 Your fallen temple, raise your prostrate altar,
 And resurrect you with a faith that bids
 You worship and bend down your knees before
 Lifting you high by the immortals' side . . ."

The answer is full of relentless defiance:

"Make your feet wings! Your pace, a league! . . .
 Neither your altar, temple, nor your gods!
 We are the godless race . . .
 Whose word is blasphemy.
 The holy gleams on high Olympus are
 Bright palaces for slayers!
 Let him be master high and maker low!
 Who knows this maker's name?
 Though here engulfed, we think; and in our prison
 We see and cry for ever unto them:
 The wolves cannot be gods!"

Rebellious thought and unchecked growth of extreme individualism lead to wild deeds of utter lawlessness. The brutal instinct of strife awakens and we are in the Age of Bronze,¹

¹ Hes. *Works and Days*, vv. 143-156.

Where the agents of wars and of ravages reign,
 Stern violence, hatred, and wrath; and they feast
 And they quaff a wine that is blood and is drawn
 From brazen and measureless casks; and their minds
 Are of brass, and brazen their dwellings and walls,
 And brazen their weapons, and brazen their breasts. . . .¹
 And when death, the vanquisher, came, on their fields
 No corn-ears waved and no roses bloomed,
 And no ivy blossomed on tree-trunk or fence;
 But a wilderness spread with a ghastly glow,
 And the threat of the thunderbolt's quivering fire. . . .

Yet even through the world of wild confusion and hate, we are led to what is divine and heroic. Greatness of action rises in all its splendor from the midst of lawlessness. Need and hardship breed the doers of great and splendid deeds. Thus we pass into another age:²

There is the world of demigods and heroes;
 Before the city of the seven gates,
 A trumpet peal has sounded deep;
 And at the sounding trumpet peal
 The city's golden gates are creaking,
 The seven gates of gold are opened!
 And dreams of mighty wings and giant works
 Mingle with majesty in long array . . .

¹ Hes. *Works and Days*, v. 150:

τοῖς δ' ἦν χάλκεα μὲν τεύχεα, χάλκεοι δὲ τε οἶκοι,
 χαλκῷ δ' ἐργάζοντο . . .

² Hes. *Works and Days*, vv. 156-174.

But even such an age passes by rapidly:

In vain! The trumpet peal, the deep,
Is echoed mockingly
In the untravelled gorges
And on the windy table-lands;
And in the lonely chasms,
The shameless Satyrs mock and dance.
Where are the dreams of deeds?
The deeds of dreams, where are they?
Deserted is the land of demigods . . .

Thus from greatness bred by might and enthusiasm,
we pass to an age in which might degenerates into base
wickedness and enthusiasm fades away into thirst for
filth. We are in the iron moulded world,¹

Where fathers hate their children; children revel
In their own fathers' death;
And brothers slaughter brothers joyfully,
And home is a lair of wolves.
Sun's frightful ghost, man breeds and wallows low
In rotten swamps of life.
For staining her, Night even curses him,
Lust hunter, doer of wrong.
Crime is lord; violence, mistress; a bitch, the woman.
About your body pure,
Trembling you fold your raiment white, O shame,
And flee away on wings.²

¹ Cf. Hes. *Works and Days*, vv. 174-202.

² Cf. *op. cit.* v. 197: καὶ τότε δὴ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυδείης
λευκοῖσιν φάρεεσσι καλυψαμένω χροῖα καλὸν
ἀθανάτων μετὰ φύλον ἴτον προλιπόντ' ἀνθρώπους
Αἰδῶς καὶ Νέμεσις . . .

The ancient poet of the *Works and Days* and of the *Theogony*¹ introduces the myth of Pandora, independent of the five ages of man, early in his first work in order to illustrate his belief that the gods have rendered our lives futile and difficult. Again the story is told objectively as something that has happened in the past when the evils were first scattered among mankind from Pandora's box. Palamas, on the other hand, makes Pandora the symbol of passionate physical love and gives it in our development the next place after the Iron Age:

And she was moulded tenderly from all
Virginhood's crowning foam, the undefiled,
A being great, remote, and light; a tower
A spirit raises among fragrant roses;
A being white, yet more than white, and gleaming . . .
And in her hands, a covered basket shook,
Filled with abundant fruit, a worthy gift
To the immortal gods. And on its sides
And on its cover, in drawings finely fitting,
Seeming the work of breath and not of hand,
All youthful loves and blossoms of the spring
Merrily danced and kissed and joined their hands. . . .
The garden of Dawn's Castle was the place;
The time, an hour that Fate had set apart;
And she, the god-sent plight of earth, itself!
And she was called Pandora, the All-gifted! . . .

¹ Cf. Hes. *Works and Days*, vv. 59-105, and *Theogony*, vv. 571-584.

All nature speaks warningly against this fair destruction, a warning, of course, which always proves vain. Passion's plea is unrestrained, and with blind eyes we see in our love a world of fascination born of shapeless chaos. Whether she is a giver of life or of destruction, Pandora is a triumphant conqueror. Mankind is always willing to lie prostrate at her feet, and we surrender all to her:

Passion unbridled dragged me on, a rider
Through narrow paths and slippery ravines;
And as I fell, it trampled me beneath
Its iron hoofs. The knife of love, the giant,
Struck me; and I decayed with quenchless longing
And perished painfully. I died and passed
Into the ice-bound world of utter darkness
To drink the water of oblivion
From the deep valley of forgotten things . . .

Thus love is the culmination of our physical growth. With it the wild seething of our blood ceases and we are transferred to the Elysian Fields of thought and contemplation, where Persephone reigns, "double and one, death's queen, life's maidenhood," at whose feet we grow calm and still. This new queen takes us away from the physical and ephemeral, frees us from the bonds of interested emotions, and shows us the Universe from the mountain tops of thought. Then it is

that the mysteries of life and nature are laid open before us; and when the lyricism which transcends all finds expression in us, then the thinker and the poet are born:

And a god's rapture filled and lifted me,
 Maker of gods; and I believed my hands
 Made it, a world I dreamed in the world of rhythm.
 For when the lyre speaks to the sunlit day
 Its word, the rock awakes, the tame soul swells,
 The tiger weeps, the wolf kneels down before it.
 And when the lyre sings in the depths of night,
 A winged flesh of light, it seems, lifts up
 The shadows and brings them purer back to life;
 And even Charon's boat moves on, swan-like;
 The Furies' vipers turn to blooming flowers.
 And when the lyre speaks in sunshine or darkness
 Its word, air demons droop grief-laden earthward;
 And gods Olympian and kings infernal
 Pause in their thrones, forget their majesty,
 And listen spell-bound like mortals, even they.¹

¹ These verses seem to have been suggested by the Hesiodic passage of the *Theogony*, vv. 94-103:

ἐκ γὰρ Μουσᾶων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος
 ἄνδρες αἰδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα κιθαρισταί·
 ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆς· ὁ δ' ὀλβίος ὄντινα Μοῦσαι
 φίλωνται· γλυκερὴ οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ῥέει αὐδή·
 εἰ γὰρ τις καὶ πένθος ἔχων νεοκηδέϊ θυμῷ
 ἄζηται κραδίην ἀκαχήμενος, αὐτὰρ αἰδοῖς
 Μουσᾶων θεράπων κλέϊα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων
 ὑμνήσῃ, μάκαράς τε θεοὺς, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,
 αἰψ' ὃ γε δυσφρονέων ἐπιλήθεται, οὐδέ τι κηδέων
 μέμνηται.

There is also, as Professor H. W. Smyth has pointed out to me, a striking

When this is attained, we are reconciled with the universe, and a new love, more lasting and more vital, is born in us, a love towards all things, even those that have injured us. The choice of Persephone to symbolize this new love of thought and contemplation that finds expression in song is one of the happiest inspirations of Kostas Palamas. The hymn which he sings in honor of the divinity who causes the lyre strings "to flow with immortal harmony" is full of beauty and power almost Pindaric. I shall not quote from it because it contains no Hesiodic reminiscence. With the raising of Pandora

similarity between these verses of Palamas and the opening verses of the first Pythian Ode of Pindar's:

χρυσέα φόρμιγξ, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ ἰοπλοκάμων
 σύνδικον Μοισᾶν κτέανον· τᾶς ἀκούει μὲν βάσις,
 ἀγλαῆς ἀρχά,
 πείθονται δ' αἰοδοὶ σάμασιν,
 ἀγχιχώρων ὅπταν προσιμίων ἀμβολὰς τεύχης
 ἐλελιζόμενα.
 καὶ τὸν αἰχματὰν κεραυνὸν σβεννύεις
 ἀενάου πυρός· εὐδὲ δ' ἀνὰ σκάπτῳ Διὸς αἰετός,
 ὠκείαν πτέρυν' ἀμφοτέρωθεν χαλᾶξαις,
 ἀρχὸς οἰωνῶν, κελαινῶπιν δ' ἐπὶ οἱ νεφέλαν
 ἀγκύλῳ κρατὶ, γλεφάρων ἀδὺ κλαῖστρον, κατέ-
 χευας· ὁ δὲ κνώσσων
 ὕγρὸν νῶτον αἰωρεῖ, τεαῖς
 ῥιπαῖσι κατασχόμενος. καὶ γὰρ βιατὰς Ἄρης,
 τραχείαν ἄνευθε λιπῶν
 ἐγχέων ἀκμάν, λαίνει καρδίαν
 κώματι, κῆλα δὲ καὶ δαιμόνων θέλγει φρένας,
 ἀμφὶ τε Λατοῖδα σοφίᾳ βαθυκόλπων τε
 Μοισᾶν.

so as to symbolize physical love, Palamas leaves Hesiod and wanders on his trail of thought alone, although Hesiod continues to be the speaker to the end of the poem. On Persephone's chariot, he rises again to the world above. There he recognizes the poet of new Greece as "his flesh and heir," a lover of the great things which the many scorn as humble, and hands him his lyre with words that carry us back to the lines from Virgil's sixth eclogue placed by Palamas under the title of his poem.¹ His closing words are:

My simple songs,
My artless words, found fire in Tartarus
And light in the Elysian Fields, and back
They come. Hear them again deep, epic, great,
Touched by the mystic circles of the world
Beyond. The stammer now becomes the word;
Dew drops, a fountain head. Here is my soul;
Take it restored to life and make it yours.

Is it too much to believe that the "Ascraean" of Kostas Palamas is the greatest poem inspired by the humble poet of Ascræ since Virgil's day? The Roman poet has kept close to the agricultural nature of Hesiodic poetry. Palamas has abandoned that side entirely, and found inspiration in the Hesiodic legends which have given

¹ Virg. Bucol. vi, 69-71: Hos tibi dant calamos, en accipe, Musae,
Ascraeo quos ante seni, quibus ille solebat
cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornose.

his creative imagination a freedom of expression and interpretation which could at the same time fit his own genius and the pulse of his age. Certainly, the greatness of the modern work is a high praise to that ancient and much neglected poet who should be read more than he is. However this may be, he has undoubtedly given the poet of Modern Greece enviable material with which to build his imposing temple of faith.

To conclude, both Hesiod and Palamas, smarting under the injustice heaped upon them by their contemporaries, make their sufferings a source of inspiration for their song. They both love the little and humble, and discover nobility and greatness in lowliness. They both cling to the legends, lore, and speech of the common people, and find beauty in their daily life and occupations. Hesiod, the poet of a primitive age, vivifies his narrative and didactic poems with a dawning personality that expresses itself through the candor, simplicity and objectivity of an unsophisticated age. The Hesiodic visions are splendid and beautiful, but nevertheless the visions of a child. Kostas Palamas, belonging to an age in which extreme individualism is impatient of lessons and maxims, drifts away from primitive simplicity in expression to a complex form that stimulates the mind with a problem without solving it

and fills the poetic demand with a rare display of sound, picture, and emotion. In short, Palamas has transfigured the Hesiodic vision with a deeper individualism; he has unified it with profounder thought and finer lyricism; and with his gorgeous imagery, his burning feeling, and his modern philosophy, he has shown that the great Pan is not yet dead, and that the ancient fountain heads of human culture are not yet dry.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,
April 2, 1916.

NOTE. — Without forgetting the numerous friends whose encouragement and assistance have made my task lighter, I am bound to express especially my indebtedness to Professor Clifford H. Moore of Harvard University, Professor Carroll N. Brown of the College of the City of New York, Mrs. E. E. Winslow, and Miss Margaret Garrison for their valuable coöperation in suggesting many changes and in reading the manuscript and the proofs.

A HUNDRED VOICES

*We are nothing; neither strong hands, nor
uplifted heads; but wounded and weary feet.*

PSICHARIS, "Kyroules," Scene 9.

A HUNDRED VOICES

FIRST NIGHT

1

SAID the great poet: "In all darkness
The greatest darkness is the soul.
Man is the woman's riddle;
And you, O woman, are man's sphinx;
A great abyss before me yawns, black law,
Alas! Alas!
And no one knows its frightfulness:
No one but I."

2

O heart of many sighs
Among desires adrift,
You beat in secrecy,
Deep hidden from all eyes.
Come out; about you Night
Has spread a mantle black.
Moan; none will hear you, none;
And none will see.

3

The people take you for a stone
Half showing in relief a thought,
My muse, for many unapproachable
And stripped of grace,
And only beautiful to few.
Yet none has thought
Of placing on the sculptured stone his ear
To hear the beating of a heart
That sounds a knell of death.

4

Without a will, alas! without a mind;
Neither the power of feet, nor words, nor hands.
Only a dream madly pursuing stars
And all things beautiful, the world, and thought!
And then the shame of passion and the threat
Of ruin! And I, the heir of souls impure,
While law bends down my knees in misery,
Have wings for a translucid azure space.

5 ¹

Have pity, men, have pity,
And pray, good Christians, for the sinner —
Open, O cursed and silent mouth:
And hear, O men, a tale from hell.
Where are the eyes and ears of them
That cursed him? Can they see and hear?
Though they be not upon this earth,
From somewhere they will hear his cry
Of agony, and they will come.

¹ Evidently inspired by the popular belief that the dead man whose body, three years after his death, is found intact in his grave bears the curse of some crime or sin committed during his lifetime and cannot return to dust before his victim has forgiven him.

6

Upon this earth of treachery, and war,
And blindness, if there is a place for you,
Hear me and speak, O Justice with your scales.
And yet I know your judgment and you, judge:
“I see things as you see them,” you will say;
“I know them as you do. Yet somewhere else
And far away a day is made for you,
A day without an end as the dark night
That cloaks you now seems dawnless.”

7

†
In front of me, the window; in the depth
The sky, the endless sky, and nothing else;
And in the midst, a tall and slender cypress
Is girdled with the sky on every side;
And whether the sky is black or strewn with stars,
In blue delight or in a raging storm,
Always the cypress slowly moves and bends
Beautiful, sad, and silent; nothing else.

8

Where are you April with your flowers, fair evenings
With your sweet-gleaming evening stars, and you
O all-transcending world of thoughts, and you
O Venus and Apollo of Olympus,
Unstirring lake of the mystic dream, and you
Joy of the lyre, paeans of gods and hymns
Of heroes? A wind has passed, a wind of death
Whose madness has blown out all songs and stars.

9

You were about to fall down a steep cliff;
And to the hand that held you back you said:
"To you, O hand, I owe it; you must be
The star that leads to a new blossoming,
To a new life and life's redemption." Then
Answered the hand and said: "The hand I am
Of ruin; I saved you from destruction once
To bring you into every death that is
And hurl you over every precipice;
Yes, even I." —

10

The violets lie crushed
Under the horse's hoof;
Quickly the palm is felled
By the slow moving saw;
The garden gate is closed;
Homeward I turn: no home;
An earthquake shook it down;
Towards the grave I go;
Even the grave repels me.

11

Such as I am with such a heart,
A bird ashiver with a breast of pain,
Nearer to light and truth I am
Than all the great and mighty of the world.
Therefore, within me something groans
In spite of all my thinness and my pain;
Contempt for the world's great and mighty,
A fitting thing for me.

12

"I am the love that always brings you lilies."

"And I am thought that brings a gleaming crown."

"And I am sorrow, and the nails I bring you."

"And I am sacrifice and bring a cross."

Are these enough for you?

"Adorn your raiment with the lilies, Muse

Most beautiful, and wear the gleaming crown;

And let the nails be mine; and lift me stretched

Upon the cross. I shall not die" —

13

+ Passing and ever passing; passing on;

A journey that knows neither yesterday

Nor a tomorrow, but a long today

That always stands before you visible

And ever weaves its visions and its dreams.

Passing and ever passing; passing on;

And on the ocean's width and on the length

Of continents your passage puts to shame

The passage of the stately birds and ships,

And battles with the rhythm of sacred Homer.

14

Uprooted, sick, and swept away
By sorrow's streams,
I wept and wept; my tears
An evil Lamia has gathered
And kept them in a glass.
"Men," says she, "whom the fates have cursed
With scorn and heavy orphanhood,
Wrecking your silence and your pride,
Take this and drink."

15

Father and mother I knew not; my food
Was hard suppression; and my drink was hatred;
Worthless the men about me; enmity
Was empress; there was little care in me
And too much war. So when love crossed my path
For the first time, bringing me every dream
And dragging every passion in its trail,
It startled me as an Atlantic nymph,
A giantess unknown, who might come forth
From the deep bosom of the open sea.

16

Word's Nereid, my mother's and my soul's
Own tongue, a thousand scorns
Have furrowed your bright face and bent your head;
Stand up erect; triumphal hymns I sing you!
And from tomorrow's world, I bring to you
The message of a victory whose gleam,
Like a far star's, will after many years
Come to us here — O tongue
Of humble Hellas, victor over death.

17

Now in the winter's heart, the almonds are ablossom,
And see, the angry month is gay with sunshine laughter,
While to this beauty round about a crown you weave,
O naked rocks and painted mountain slopes of Athens.
The fields of snow on Parnes seem like fields in bloom;
A timid greenish glow caresses like a dream
The Heights of Corydallus; white Pentele smiling greets
The Sacred Rock of Pallas; and Hymettus stoops
To listen to the love song of Phaleron's sea.

18

Bad? No! I wish you were. But something worse you
are:

You touched the sacred lyre with an unworthy hand,
And ignorant mobs took your reeling in the dust
For the swift flight of golden wings; and then you went
And sat close by the poet's side so thoughtlessly,
And none dared rise and come to drag you from the
place.

And see, instead of scorning you, the just was angry
And gave you glory with the arrow of his verse.

19

O hour beyond all words and colors,
For you he lives the whole day long;
For you he lies awake all night;
For you he urges on the hungry dog
Within him and the raging dog without;
“Bark! bite! I tremble not!”
For you he suffers humbly all
Slow torments of his flesh and soul.
And then you come and bring with you
All poisons and all ridicules
In kingly raiments and in golden cups.

A slave of slaves I am beyond all hope;
And no redeemer I expect to come;
I go as goes the slow expiring wave
Of shallow waters towards a lovely beach.
Yet I forget, forget, forget it all;
Like the Messiah in a new Judaea,
I lift myself each time you bend and blow
Your tender sacred breath upon my hair,
O Muse of Thought.

SECOND NIGHT

21

THE river banks of sunlit waters know you,
O reaper, and the fair anemones,
Prized treasures of the riverbanks, which you
Pluck with quick worthy hands and place with care
In alabaster vases and light baskets.
While I with secret joy admire their gleam
From far away and dare not stoop nor touch them;
And yet their love, O reaper, is for you;
And though I feel them more, I am a stranger.

Go sleep in your ancestral sacred books,
Ancient words lying dead in gilded shrouds;
They are your graves. Be dumb, O startled ravens;
Life calls with louder trumpeting for me;
As long as life's hand holds me fast to her
And I ride steadily the steed of Thought,
I drink with growing eagerness the breeze
Of the hillside, and speak with greater freedom
The simple language of the country-folk.

23

Leaning against the walls about, the books
Faithful and silent sleep like righteous men.
Then you, O Diotima, come among them,
Like an enchantment brought on airy wings;
And from all books,
As if some one had startled them from sleep,
Something is heard
That sounds like the low humming of the bees:
“Who are you? Wisdom or the foam-born goddess?
And if you are the goddess born of foam,
Why come you here?”

24

Others may wander far in distant lands and seek
In Alpine mountains high the magic edelweiss;
I am an element immovable; each year,
April and May delight me in my village garden;
O lakes and fiords, O palaces of France and shrines
And harbors, northern lights and tropic flowers and
forests,
Wonders of art, and beauties of the world unthought,
I love a little island lying here before me.

25

I was sixteen and loved
A little lass, the beautiful Pothula:
One day I offered her
My picture in a golden heart to keep;
My little lass, Pothula, took the gift,
And joy made roses dawn on her pale beauty.
And then, Pothula tore
The picture, cast the pieces to the winds,
And hung the golden heart
As ornament about her lovely neck.

26

O lemon trees with your green-golden fruit
And great nut trees and little citron trees,
O trees grown in thick groves, receive me, save me,
And close me in your veils and nests and arms;
Hide me from skies and seas and places deep
And high; take me away from all that is
Unfathomable and beyond all reach
About me and above. Let me forget
The Gorgons and Medusas of my thought
And let me breathe again and rest among you.

27

Said the Flesh: "Sound is the sleep and heavy
That binds me to the Earth; what is my end?"
Said the Spirit: "As on wings of winds
As something immaterial, I rise
Towards spaces infinite; what is my goal?"
Said the Soul: "My doom is endlessly
To toss between you, blessed ones, and moan;
Either give me your wings, O flying Spirit,
Or let me have your chains of sleep, O Flesh."

28

Whether she came from the abysmal depths
Or from the heaven's heights I never knew;
Yet this I know: One day, a mother stood
Before me and breathed into me three gifts:
Heart, health and mind:
My childish hands broke health to bits; I threw
My heart to be a feast to birds of prey;
I buried in a sunless cell my mind.
And see what is it that the winds beat now?
What is it that the gnawing worms devour?

29

Tolstoy, hail, O bard of epic battles,
Righteous revealer of the soul of man,
New prophet for a Christ unknown and pure,
Though ancient is the gospel in your hands!
Upon the temple that you built, gowned priests,
Hurled their anathemas as liquid fire
Meant to destroy it; yet an angel came
And lifting up your temple on his wings
He placed it as a star among the stars.

30

Each time a city's ruins are unearthed,
The ruin-hunter's pick will sing this song:
"The endless tide of May and January
Rules history just as it rules the lilies;
As long as Earth turns to the sun, new Troys
And new Mycenae blossom forth and fade:
And you are neither first nor last remains
Of old forgotten and faith-dazzling Athens."

31

Yes I remember many years ago —
Down from the tower's height and all about
A lavish wealth of green; and in the plain,
White River's royal ford; and everywhere,
The glimmer of the moon spread vision-like.
Soul, nun of care, deserted by the world,
That hour of ecstasy will ever live
When for the first time you communed with great
And sacred Nature's holy mysteries.

I passed the secret path that meadows hide,
Went past the valley, climbed the uphill trail,
And reached the mountain top. The wise man found
A city here with Cyclopean walls;
Yet my love verses will not sing for it.
Rumor, the open-mouthed, has led me here
Where Lady Irene, the star of beauty lived;
And I have come to draw from its rich light
That haunts the ruined castle with its spell.

¹ The following is one of the legends about Lady Irene which is in vogue today in Acarnania:

"In the old times there was a very handsome prince who lived in the Castle of the Three Hearts, a palace buried in the Earth. His name was Sunless and he was doomed to die the moment a sunbeam shone on him. The prince was in love with Lady Irene who had her castle on a hill across the stream and every night he would cross the river to be with her. Once Lady Irene was impatient to have him stay with her all night and she ordered her men to kill all the chanticleers who announced the coming of the dawn. Prince Sunless did not hear their song and woke up after daybreak. He hurried away but when he had reached the stream the sun rose over the hill and he died."

33 ¹

"We stand before you, two immortal maidens,
Love-smitten daughters of the Cretan lyre!
We are twin mothers of a lovely April
That once dawned here, rose sandaled. Health and joy
To you!"

With clear and singing voice you spoke,
Sisters of the Twelve Islands, crowned with sea foam;
You, Erophilé, wore an azure robe;
A royal purple clothed you, Aretusa!

¹ The two maidens, Erophilé and Aretusa, are the heroines of two popular works, in the early literature of Modern Greece. "Erophilé" was a tragedy by George Chortatses, who was born in Rhethymnos, Crete, and lived about 1620. Aretusa is the heroine of "Erotocritos" a love epic by Vikentios Kornaros, who was born in Seteia, Crete, and lived about the sixteenth century. They are among the earliest literary works of merit in Modern Greek.

34

The osier — does it tremble still? And does
The laurel bloom? And are the poplar trees
Pure silver, and the citron fruit pure gold?
And do you see the girl of Ampliane,
The little maiden with soft blooming cheeks,
With that big peasant woman, the wood cutter,
Go by towards the cool springs and the high pastures?
And do their rough shod feet fall heavily,
Sounding like lashes on the pebbles white
Of the dry river bed as they go past?

35

What is this graveyard's name,
This graveyard always green and full of light
That the sun's heat can never parch
Nor the rainfalls destroy?

What is this graveyard's name,
Where ages kneel as humble worshippers,
That has Apollos for its dead
And Parthenons for graves?

36

Scorn not the big rose on my breast;
Though not a child of mother spring
Born in her garden, still it lives
And is my faithful ornament
For day and night; man's hands have made it
Of precious silk; and though truth's shadow,
It is no lie; the magic blood
Of art within it gives it life.

37

Blood seething and blood beating, blood that burns
Like flames and drips like dew in man or flower,
And blood that life, the faultless artisan,
Divides and purges with a matchless wisdom!

What pyramids and what eternities
Can rise above a moment's majesty,
A moment that appears on lightning wings,
Becomes a rose or Helen, and is gone?

38

The trip is over; we have come; there is
The little island Beautiful; twin shores;
The open one, light flooded and snow white,
With ruins and flying blackbirds, picture like.
The other — O myrtle groves and jonquil gardens
And shades of orange trees with boughs full blown
When love speaks and the nightingales make songs! —
One shore says “Here!” The other answers, “Look!”
Tell me, my boat, where shall we cast our anchor?
My boatman, tell me, where are we to go?

39

Summer is here; so friend of song, come back
To the rich kingdom of our own desire.
The oak has spread its shade for us; the sea
Has decked with foam the mossy rock. They wait
For us. My mind enjoys from now the hour
That is so full of fragrance and of green;
There is a festival within my heart;
My thought is revelling with joy. The queen
Is noble; and the king is worthy: Come!

40

Summer is back; and yet my lot is that
Of the huge man-like apes that hang on trees
Held by weak roots and bending with thick leaves
Over the sacred waters of the Ganges.
So holding fast to my own tree I hang
Mingling my howls with the wild howls of others;
And now and then one slips and falls and drowns —
Silence — Then quick the howling starts again.

THIRD NIGHT

41

I, RHYTHM, the fairy king, have left behind
Closed in her crystal tower my own beloved,
Queen rime, love's ruling empress, who aspires
To hold me always at her feet a slave;
And riding on my steed, I went to hunt
Up mountain-tops and mountain dales in places
Open to light and flooded with the sun;
There I flung arrows freely round about,
And caught dream's deer and sorrow's nightingales.

42 ¹

Land of the slave, destruction, sun, and sleep!
The slave, crouched always in his sluggish flesh,
Embroiders empty thoughts for you and weaves
Works unbefitting you. Destruction hurls you
Down into deep unfathomable seas;
And divers search for you in vain; and worlds
Mourn for your loss. The sun brings you as gifts
His sapphires and his diamonds; and sleep
Brings you the calm of the immortal gods,
Sweetheart of sleep, destruction, slave and sun.

¹ To Greece under the Turkish yoke.

43

Vision of the green hills laved by two seas,
Constantinople, country of my country,
Shamed by the Sultans, shriveled by decline,
The deathless eagle always thinks of you;
And sailing from the north and west and east,
Past ranks of victor kings raised high by him,
He turns at night to you to shed warm tears
Upon the graves of your dead emperors.

44 ¹

Beat me and strip me,
Cast me in the dust.
Wherever I may stretch my hands, I touch
Treasures of clothing and of ornaments.
You clothe yourselves in naked mockery
Though you rob me;
For what on me are robes and purple mantles
Become plain tatters and vile rags on you.

¹ Greece to her enemies.

45 ¹

Take me where Karpenesi's highlands are;
Then to the soft sea breeze of Kleisova —
I love Varasova, and always dream
Of you, O mountains high of Rumele
And coastlands of Morea. Virgin world
And strong, give to this weakling strength and soul
And tongue and swiftness, give yourself to him
With all your nakedness and let your offspring
Be a new matchless song for a new Greece.

46

Leave not your sorrow here;
But with a mother's care take it abroad
Where life and dreams, far on the mountain top,
Breathe still; then plant it firmly on the land
Of all that is unspoken;
Gather and hide its voice within its lips;
And if its eyes are overcome and closed,
Then close your eyelids, too, and die with it.

¹ True inspiration comes from the land and the people's heart.

47 ¹

Under the shade of the cool orange tree of Crete,
The bard Kornaros, I, have given you a soul
And body on my lyre with sound of nightingales
That Charon, the death maker, cannot take away,
O royal vision of the lyre, you, Aretusa,
And given you a gift most worthy of your beauty,
Your mate victorious, the rider clothed in white.
And now — may mountains, seas, and forests weep for
me —
I worship and I envy the creature of my hands!

¹ See note under Voice 33.

48

— All found me guilty, judged my deeds as sins;
Go to the guillotine, my head, and bow.

— The steel knife falls repeating blow on blow,
But cannot slay you, murderer and thief.
Why raise yourself again?

— Be merciful!

— The steel knife cannot save you from your body;
It touches you and slashes you, but you
Still live.

— My lady, help!

— Wait not for her.

49

Go to the mountain top and there abide;
When you are cleansed and worthy, come again
To the dark lands and speak the words of him,
The Acragantine wise man, to the people:
I am a god, no more a mortal man.

— Innocent man. Can you not see this chain
Of diamonds that holds me in the depths
Of Tartarus, bound among thoughts and sorrows?

50

Most noble of old grave reliefs,
O ancient soul that death has grieved,
Carved with the chisel of some god
On marble stone Athenian,
Give me your sorrow so that I
May clothe it in the solemn robe
Of harmony and close its tear
Within the golden cup of rhythm.

Beautiful sleep and death
With wings more beautiful
Lulled you with gentle song,
And carried you away.
And to both bridegrooms bride,
You gave your virgin body,
And do not know whose kisses
Are sweetest to your lips.

52 ¹

“Scribe with your papers and your pen,
Here chiefs of warriors have died
And valiant corsairs have been slain
For Maximo’s sweet kiss and glance.”
“I, too, have come just to be slain
And meet my death before her eyes.”
“Scribe with your papers and your pen,
Your blood will stain the grass in vain.”
“The blood of other men is water
That turns to vapor and is gone:
From mine, a fragrant flower will grow,
Frankincense for fair Maximo.”

¹ Maximo is one of the heroines of the Epic of “Digenes Akritas” the origin of which reaches back to the tenth century A.D. and has as its subject the struggle of the Greek Empire against the Saracens on the borderland between Syria and Asia Minor. Maximo is a beautiful queen and has many suitors. They fail to conquer her in single combat and one after another, they are killed by her until she is defeated by Digenes.

53 ¹

“And who is he, my child?”

“Mother, St. Demetrios.”

And it was you, Dexileos, gallantly riding on,
Unfading blossom white that grew of art Athenian!
The words so great and unforgettable had taken life
Deep in the nation's heart, and a child's lips had
spoken them.

We are not Christians nor pagans; but we would create
Of cross and idol a new life whose name is yet unknown.

¹ The grave-stone with the relief of the young Athenian knight Dexileos, which is still to be seen in the Ceramicus of Athens, bears considerable resemblance to the popular pictures of St. Demetrios. The casual explanation of a child to his mother, overheard by the poet, has given him the text for this “voice.”

54

“Narcissus,¹ blessed flower, the ancient god
Has made you pure and exquisite with grace,
A trembling Pleiad, fresh with morning dew.”

“Call me just jonquil, timid poet, jonquil.
The new bridegroom has changed my ancient name;
And life and love about me call me jonquil;
Even the sun, who rains his shining gifts
On the eternal loveliness that was
Always our own greets us by the new name.”

¹ The Greek word is “Hyacinthos,” but the description applies to the narcissus. The common name for the flower in Greek is *zoumpouli*.

The scented idyls of fresh rosy cheeks
This village gives are not my journey's goal;
But I have come for you, plain villager.
The tree that spreads thick roots deep in your soul
Brings forth a living blossom on your lips,
Your speech.
I come to gather from the tree this flower;
And take it to the rainless barren land
Hungry for green and thirsty for the dew
To make of life a forest, and of art
A garden.

56

Then,

I led you through the land of the immortal water;

And you would lean your head upon your father's
breast,

And tales of old would set your eyes agleam with wonder

And pass their bright caressing hands across your hair.

Now,

That you have left the flesh, a phantom of delight,

It is your turn to lead me on your distant journey;

And so I follow you while you are guiding me

Amidst the stars of dreams and through the hell of
thought.

57

I set my birdlime in the forest of desire
And caught with it familiar birds and birds most
 strange,
Birds always singing and birds dumb, white birds and
 yellow,
And others clothed in smooth enameled coats of feathers;
There were all birds whose bite is bitter, and all those
That are most tender; birds that drag upon the ground
Like wounded ones, and those with restless wide-
 spread wings:
I caught and closed them in the forest of my heart.

58

Homer and Aeschylus and Heracleitus,
And words divine of Plato, in the hands
Of the wise fools and in the minds of dry
Schoolmasters, you become grim ghosts that scare
Things beautiful away and are mere totems
For soulless grammar rules.
Like racers on foot and riders of swift horses,
Pass on from art to life, from thought to nature;
And from the voices of the hills,
And from the speech of humble mouths,
Your miracles will reach again the heights
Of mountain mind; and you will make of thought
A new Olympus, and of deeds an Ossa.

59

O chosen few that may be countless by tomorrow,
There is a truth down here, a truth that hatred strikes;
And something beautiful that scorn has bound in chains;
And there is virtue held in fear and in disgrace.
Young seers, first to wake to light, and joys of April,
From the green trunks of trees, white columns can be
made.

Though in this land you are the priests and worshippers,
Yet there is more to do: forward, young seers, forward;
Forward to battle for your gods!

60

The sea that holds you in her arms is panting;
And with her endless panting makes you shake
And tremble, little rowboats by the beach,
Boats heavy-loaded, weathered by the storms,
And you, O little nests with wings for lovers,
And stately ones with oars of ivory,
And you with your red sails, and little one
Painted in green like emerald and bound
Alone, apart from all that sail the sea.

FOURTH NIGHT

61

NEW Greece, my humble mother, born of one
Who was most beautiful among all mothers,
Your children now, to hide their homeliness
And shame, call *you* a homely one and find
Disgrace in your new name. Yet on the peaks
Of high Olympus, bards and valiant men
Think of your name as sacred; while I write it
With shining golden letters on your forehead
And kiss it humbly on your bleeding feet.

62

Alone, I? Never! I am not alone.
Heroes and men and gods about me haunt
My humble darkened cell, and move before me,
Like clouds of light mated to dreams as shadows
Of dusky gray are mated to the dawn.
And from a corner something like an angel
Is watching over me with sleepless eyes.
Alone, I? Never! I am not alone.

63

*Then I turned and lifted up mine eyes,
and looked and behold, a flying scythe.¹*

ZECHARIAH, V, 1.

Pass reaping through the cursed land, O scythe
With wings, stern vision of the Hebrew prophet;
Mow down the humble people with its chiefs,
And strike the sinner with the innocent;
Destroy all living things; and spare no flower
Nor seed. Some day, many a year and age
From now — who knows? — some father may descend
And with his mighty hand may plant a life
Most fit to live on this bare desert island.

¹ The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, which is still being used in Greece, translates the last word of the verse, "scythe" instead of "roll." The poet, of course, has the Greek version in mind.

64

When with its wings my soul flew past the wall,
It left behind timidity and longing
And languishing, three mates who never sleep;
And my soul clothed itself in a new robe
Of the same stuff of which the soul is made.
Timidity and longing are no more;
And languishing is gone; and as before,
The roses grow; and like a fair archangel,
Sorrow shepherds my soul to greater things.

Gods with a thousand names, love, flesh, mind, fire,
Powers and delusions, duty and desires,
And fate and nothingness, you build your castles
Lofty and broad, and show them to the world
As high as mountains and as wide as seas.
And with gates ever barred, these palaces
Air-hung, untrodden, and unfathomable
Shelter you, gods with a thousand names; outside
A host of hearts and thoughts, like spirits damned,
Search vainly for a passage that will lead
Within to let them mingle with the gods.

66

Castles intangible, beyond man's art,
Palaces smooth, titanic, delicate,
With columns, pediments, foundations, roofs,
And walls wrought of the light most fair and pure
Of northern skies and of the nightly charms
Of a great witch, time brings all things hand-wrought
To ruin; and to the cutting blade of steel
The marble is most fragile; yet there is
In you a loveliness beyond destruction
Even when time has touched you with cold hands.

The wise man said to man:

“I am a measure new

And show all human things at a new price and weight;

I cast all idols down or crush them into dust.

Yet the destroyer, death, is a creator too.

I bring you a bridge mightier than Jacob's ladder,

A bridge I planned and built; and now it stands before
you,

Ready, to lead you from the marshy sea that folds

A lurid shroud about you to divine Olympus.”

68

And man made answer to the wise:

“Crush every idol.

Over their broken fragments I shall weep and wail;
Though you transform all things, to me they are the
same;

And I shall call them by the same names as before;
I tread on thorns and fly towards roses; and towards all
I drag myself save towards what you have built for me.
I cannot climb where you would lead, nor can I go
Forward; and like a night bird blinded by the day,
I beat my wings, wise man, and droop before your light.”

Wings of Seraphs ever flying!
Eyes of Cherubs ever watching!
Always loving, loving all,
The Seraphs spread their wings;
Always knowing, knowing all,
The Cherubs beam with light.
And all wait for an angel joy
To wed their eyes with all their wings.
When will it come, the unborn one?

70

And then as now, on the most ancient fields of Cnossos
— So many thousand years ago —

Women and men, roses and nightingales, made love
Among the flowers of May and April.

And then as now, the laws and arts were blossoming
As wisdom blossomed in the mind;

And Minos shone upon his throne.

And then as now, the sculptor carved on the marble
stone

A lily. All that was is gone;

Only the lily lives.

We always hide from strangers' eyes
Our deepest sorrow and most sacred care;
And cloak in darkness a prized balsam
That even a faint ray of light may harm.
And sometimes something stirs in us,
Blowing a raging storm within our thought;
Something so sad and terrible
That we would keep it secret from ourselves.

72

A God creator I became,
And I created Love; and in her Eden
Love walked alone, and a sad cloud
Cast lovely shadows on her god-like face.
And I put her to sleep and took
From her own side and made a mate for her:
“Tell me, O beautiful one, who are you?
Who are you youth immovable
Who never smile? Are you the rock or fate?
Oh, who are you?”
“My name is Duty.”

73

From that far field I'll bring the snow-white flowers
Whose name or scent I cannot tell;
I will not make bouquets of them nor weave
Their blossoms into fragrant crowns.
Bee-like I'll suck their soul of airy sweetness,
And within little delicate
Vases of crystal I will close a new
And precious ointment that will be
Most rare and exquisite. I know the vine
In the far field, and there alone
I go to gather the white fragrant flowers.

74

O little houses on the mountain side, now close
To one another and now scattered wide, and drooping
Over the limpid waters of the little lake,
O little houses green and white, the night is near:
Light up your lamps filled with abundant olive oil;
Soon in the dark the eye will look for you in vain;
The night will clothe you with her choking scarf, and
 then
Nothing, O blessed houses, will remain of you
But an undying shimmer in the calm of night.

75

I dream of the untrodden regions of the world
Where no explorer ever went; I dream of stars
That hide in space beyond all eyes, of realms that lie
Amidst the icy whiteness of the poles, and realms
Perched in the hot embraces of the tropic sun;
I dream of men kept pure and undefiled who bloom
Like trees and live like creatures in the wilderness;
I dream of mountain tops, of precipices vast,
Of ocean nights, and, most of all, of you, my soul,
Mistress and slave closest to me and most remote.

76

O little life of mine there is most precious stuff
In your own hands though nothing else; be comforted.
Stoop to your only treasure, mould it without blemish
And set it high on an enduring pedestal.
Give it the thoughtful and deep searching marks of
 reason;
Give it the play divine of rhythm; and let it stay,
O little life of mine, a symbol of your passing,
A drop of dew in the abyss of endless sorrow.

Far glimmered the sea and the harvest darkened the
threshing floors;

I cared not for the yellow harvest nor looked on the
threshing floors;

For I stood by the edge of the rippling sea and gazed on
your face,

O white, ethereal Liakoura,¹ waiting till from your midst
Parnassus of old shine forth and the nine fair sisters of
song.

The fate of Parnassus is changed; the nine fair sisters
are gone;

Yet you stand still, O Liakoura, young and forever one,
O Muse of a future rhythm and a beauty still to be born.

¹ Liakoura is a name for Mt. Parnassus common among the peasants.

78

“Love?” “No! A beast of prey is hungry for your flesh.”

“Duty?” “A luring phantom for the sleeping slave!
Ship stripped of spars adrift upon the open sea,
The coast cliffs lie in wait for you and gnash their teeth.
Forward!”

“Why? Is my place of execution changed?
Where will you take me, guards? A storm of lava burns
Before us.”

“Silence!”

“Make my shackles lighter so
That I may drag my feet where you will lead me.”

“Go!”

79

The little timid journeys made for love
Will not be angry if I turn my song
To my great journeys: one, to some Attic tombs
Stately and carved of marble; and the other,
To some dark humble tombs with spider webs.
With wonder working hand, I opened them
And raised the lovely maidens buried there;
And found Byzantine queens in humble graves;
Simple Tanagra girls, in stately marble.

80

The burning song flame of the maid of Lesbos,
I burned and flashed on lips and strings of lyres;
Then written on a precious pergamene,
A monk took me and cast me in the depths
As if I were a fiend; and in my place
He raised a hymn of cold asceticism.
But see, above ascetic ashes now
My quenchless fire burns on; I shall not die.

FIFTH NIGHT

81

THERE'S nothing in this home foreboding evil;
 A wife who looks like an evening star to me;
 Tears like a rainfall close on summer's trail;
 The sun makes all, even our poverty,
 Be bright with joy; birds, blossoms, boys and girls
 Mingle in one unbroken harmony;
 Words fall like tender kisses; lips are red
 Like cherries; love builds nests on April's lap.

A thunderbolt is forged to strike this home.¹

¹ An allusion to the death of the poet's child.

82

Short-sighted worshippers of meadows green
May scorn the barrenness of rocks. Yet hear,
O springs and shadows and great fields of green;
A blood Olympian flows through the veins
Of the rough rock. And Doric forests bloom,
And fair Ionic shrines like May and April,
And shining columns, pediments and friezes,
And temples many-styled, a fertile growth
From the white barrenness of rocky earth.

83

Relieve your voice of the bright song, and cast
Your crystal glass of green on the bare light;
And sink into the softest whispers blown
Along the calmest sand-beach of the coast.
Become like something that expires in sounds
Of tender questioning. And only then
The lovely missing bird may come with answer
From where it has now flown, scared by the sound
That stirred the air with sudden violence.

84

Silence! Sound is a lie and words are daggers;
Illusion everywhere. Beneath the stars
A siren sings an evil song of death.
And every voice that rises from below
And every harmony that comes from high
Bring fear and trembling. Silence, mother silence,
Let me drink from your bosom the new milk,
A nectar for the gods, restoring life.

In vain; what speaks within me knows no silence.

85

With my heroic mountain strings I sang
Of manly things and sacred; and with a breath
Divine I steeled my withered breast and raised
A song of thunder for the stupid crowd;
And they, men young and old, like startled beasts
Turned upon me. The wrath of ignorance
Roared loud about me; but a mighty hand
Invisible above me spread and blessed me.

86

The apple in your hand is gold, and pearls
Adorn your robe, Arodafnusa,¹ breath
Of Venus. When the cruel queen, to vent
Her hate, cast you into the burning oven,
The flames were gentle starlight to your touch;
And so unscathed by the all-blasting fire,
And young again and fair, Arodafnusa,
You conquer death and rout him with your love.
The flash of magic beauty filled your eyes
Like an avenger. Oh, what dizzy depths
The sea is hiding with its bitter waves!

¹ Arodafnusa is the name of the heroine, in a modern Cyprian poem.

87

Thirsty, I knelt before you, Muse of Thought;
And my words failed me in your presence, Muse:
You stretched your hand and, hailing me your slave,
You led me to star-fronted deer and griffins;
You clothed me in a royal crimson robe
And bade me die a king upon your altar;
Yet you could not divine my quest, O Muse
Of prophecy: a cup of cool, pure water.

88

All tangled mysteries that night has woven
Let me unravel in the open light,
Beneath the brilliant stars and in the shade
Of plane trees; I will test their silent riddles
On the green river bank in the bright air.
I am a man of Athens; your dark books
Like castles I have locked, Philosophy,
And brought you into light where you may grow.
Softly, O Diotima, whisper me
Again, like leaf and wave, the praise of love,
Love, king and magic demon of all life.

89

Friend, I? Reserve all portions to yourselves,
And may your crumbs and seeds be blessed, too;
Though there be poverty about me, hunger,
And birds and children looking for your help,
May your bread plate be ever full. I come
Not to your table but to see your garden;
I seek what I deserve: a crown for me
Alone, of love or hatred, or contempt,
Whole, undivided — all, and even more.

90

O queens and heroines of sad Melpomene,
Phaedra, Iphigenia, and Polyxena,
Hecuba, and you, daughters of Oceanus,
Over the glittering of the Saronic gulf
And through the ruined temples of white stones you
spread

Your tragic shadows, phantoms of enchantment. Sing
Your valiant song, Antigone, though it is drowned
Amidst the broken wail of death that chills all hope,
Of prophetess Cassandra, bard of peerless anguish.

91

Xenophanes, Parmenides, Empedocles,
A temple dedicated to your worship rises,
Thinkers divine; the silver brilliance of your work
Glitters above pale relics and forgotten ruins;
And Hymenaeus, who has wedded verse and wisdom
On the same path, made rhythm of thought and law of
song.

O triple Muse without return, what miracle
Will bring us back the peerless blossoms of your April?

92

Neither the might that makes all others kneel
Nor yet the arrow's stealthy power to strike
Is mine. Of grace or beauty I have nothing;
And I am neither eagle, nightingale,
Nor mind, but timid rhythm and a cracked piece
Of clay; I move like one that lives and live
Like one dead; shunned by all things that are fair
And strong, and you, last crown of mine, Thought Muse.

93

Whether you will or not, I lead you far
 To distant places,
And spread a sea or raise a mountain land
 Midway our journey;
In the blue vistas that the distance makes
 I create you new.
Whether you will or not I lead you far
 To things immovable.

Sometimes some lives are brothers to some deaths.

Over your grave so green with weeds, my child,
 May you become a marble Seraph.

94

My little fountain in my little yard,
Wait not for me to bring my mouth to yours.
How can I drink your water now? You know
My crystal glass is broken to small chard;
How can I drink your water now? My hands
Are so unclean and such a fever burns
Within my mouth that if I touch your lips
With mine, I fear, my little fountain, that
My fire might make your little dew dry up.

95

Dedicated to Kalirrhoe Parren.

Woman of all time, Mary, Helen, Eve, Athena,
Your hour has come. Put to the test your untried wings
And rise on high. Your burden is removed; you are
No more a slave. Fly to the sacred future land,
Mother of a new life that brings new joy,
And in your flight take man and raise him in your arms,
And be creator of a new harmony, the woman
That is love, beauty, wisdom, faith, virginity.

96

O Spartan maidens, crowns of immortal Athens,
Caryatides,
Gone is your silent sister; the barbarians have taken her
With pirate hands and left the five of you behind.
Your stately forms,
Which even death has left untouched, the pang of sorrow
touches now
Deeper than death. The sister moaned and wailed for
her captivity,
And you moaned back in vain; the mighty columns of
the noble hill
Became the fountains of sad tears; and a great tempest
rose and raged
And made your Doric garments flutter in the wind like
savage phantoms.

97

“O Caryatides, do you not know me? Though from
foreign lands

I come, I am no stranger; I am the sister you had lost.
Take me into your arms again; my native place will be
My throne. Franks, Germans, Scythians, all sucked
my milk and grew;

The pirates are now heroes; and the veins of the bar-
barian

Throb with the precious blood of your own fathers of
Greek birth.

Reblossoming with the world's youth, a corsair I have
come

Bringing you in a new-cut reed the ancient sacred flame.”

98

We would have started from the city in the night,
And would have climbed the hill to gaze upon the sea,
And look upon the beaming sun in all its glory.
The joy of the first men would be our precious prize;
But sleep ensnared us and we tarried in the city
Too long; and then with futile hopes we turned away
Towards a new goal. So though my dreams are dreams
 of sunlight,
Whenever I awake, night veils my sunless path.

99

What blessing, children, shall I give you now,
And what inheritance shall I bequeath
To you, my blossoms? About you, wolves and pests.
Naked I am mirrored in your eyes; I see
Everywhere in your blood marks that are mine.
Yet in the mist, the wind of your existence
Blows tenderly and moves on purer wings;
And light is struggling to transform the monster;
The mother's purity, truth, beauty, wisdom.

100

O sins of weakness, sufferings of flesh,
O wasted youth, and wayward years of manhood,
Dreams robed in white and thoughts of bitter scorn,
Sweet mate, and orphan home, and cruel life,
My hour of death is near. Yet when the hands
Of the black ogress, throttler of the world,
Press me with iron claws I shall not fear;
Written on me with burning letters, she
Will read: "I loved you well, O Muse of Thought!"

January, 1902.

**FROM THE HYMNS AND SONGS
OF WRATH**

A HYMN OF THE BRAVE

Dedicated to D. C. Hesseling who teaches Modern Greek in the University of Leiden and who made me feel proud by what he said about this Hymn in the "Nederlandsche Spectator," March, 1901.

THE MUSE

SOMETHING great and something beautiful,
Something from beyond and far away
Reaches here in waves of lightning flashes,
Seeking for itself the crown of song.
Bard, awake; take from the forest's trembling,
Mingle with the storm-cloud's threatful anger,
And remember the old song of Pindar:
"I am not a maker of stone statues;
Maker of songs am I!"

THE POET

Among the gardens of Hesperides,
I loved the fruit that bent the topmost bough
Of a gold apple tree;
Awake me not.

And with my harp of gold and ivory,
I try to make a captive of the sound
That holds all men in thrall;
And with my song
To tame the savage dragon guard.

THE MUSE

Awake; you are no maker of stone statues;
Awake; maker of songs you are;
And in your song, my chosen one,
There are all things of flesh and spirit
From dreams of lilies
To thirsts of nations;
Awake and see!

THE POET

I see; above me spreads a sky
Like a faint smile on Sirens' lips;
And at my feet — O futile longings —
The cursed country of the Greeks!

The corsair Time
Has buried in abysmal depths

Alive this matchless queen of deed and thought.
And now, blow after blow, the searching pick
Of the wise antiquarian unearths
The buried bones
Of a huge broken skeleton;
A wilderness about; and blasphemies
Of shouting mobs tear through the sacred air;
Languid and idle people live a life
Of indolence.

Glory, alas! is not a thing of ruins;
Glory is only the great fir that stands
A fearless challenge to the thunderbolt;
And glory is the great tree that can match
Stout branches with the wings of birds
And casts a shadow dripping with cool dew
On ruddy sun-tanned laborers.
And glory is the tree that falls
When the wood-cutter strikes it with his axe,
And falls
With all the violence of a wounded valor
Born on great wings —
Wake me not!

THE MUSE

Awake; you are no maker of stone statues;
Awake; maker of songs you are;
And song is not forever
The heart's lament
To fading autumn leaves,
Nor yet the secret whisper of the soul of dreams
To the still shadows of the night.

Song suddenly becomes a roar and clatter,
The joy of all sea-beaten birds
Among the storms of elements
And storms of nations.
And song becomes
The Marathonian triumphant;
And song blown by the mouth of wrath
Travels across the ashes of a Sodom.

Something great and something beautiful,
Something from beyond and far away,
Travelling glory brings you
On her sky-roaming wings.

Glory has come! Her wings and feet
Bear witness of her wanderings
From distant lands with dust of gold;
She brings aloë flowers unknown to you
From fields where Kaffir flocks are grazing.

Strange flower-months
Startle your ancient spring;
And from the tropics to the north,
The unfamiliar groan
Of the Atlantic dragon fills the air,
A groan that rouses lakes and woods
Of Africa and is reechoed
From the Red Sea, a Lamia,
To the white sea, our Nereid
With tender breasts of foam.

Thin and sickly were the plants
On the bosom of the ancient motherland:
But the winds picked up the seed,
Carried it to Libyan recesses,
And transplanted it abroad,
Casting it in deep ravines
And on lofty mountain meadows.

A new blood filled all growth
And made the strong-stemmed plants
Grow even stronger than before;
And men war-glad grew up
And raised a roaring shout
Like waterfalls where mountains meet;
And men war-glad grew up
As rare as the rare diamonds
Found in the bosom of their motherland.
You know them, mountains, winds, horizons,
High tides, and murmurs of the restless seas,
And fountains of the shining gold
That will become their crowns.
And god-built mountain passes,
Castles fit for them, you know them;
And from your distant corners green with woods
You herald forth with pride their fame
To the empress Europe,
O Africa, slave-land of mystery.
And above all you know
The worth of few who dare live free,
O heartless England,

Tamer of continents and races,
Rider of the wild horses of the sea.

THE POET

It was still early dawn
For the new century
When you¹ awoke and looked about,
Eager to make a crown
Of broken chains;
And your awakening
Came like a witching hour,
Ineffable queen of deeds and thoughts.
There were no strings upon your lyre
That did not flow with song like fountains.

You woke with all your armor,
With glories past and glories new;
And there were on your Herculean shield
Wonders of lands and ages, gods and heroes,
Wrought with living signs.

¹ In this and in the following passages, the poet addresses Greece and refers to her struggle for independence (1821-1829) and to the years of unfulfilled hopes and apparent decay that followed, culminating in the defeat of 1897.

You woke with all your history;
But see, your history
Is harlot to the men with crafty words;
Your shield, polluted by unholy harpies;
A flood has swept all things away;
And there is nothing left
Either of new foundations
Or ancient palaces.
But with the sunset of a century,
Dawn comes of souls unsung and savage lands!

O age now passing,
Your trophies still remain; still live your pyramids;
A thousand torches gleam upon your path,
Redeemers of benighted worlds.

O age now passing,
There are volcanoes that you set afire
And lava showers that you brought;
Triumphant tyrants gathered joy from you;
Many a mistress truth,
Many a virgin beauty,
You dragged like slaves, bound to your chariots.

O age now passing,
Whether for praise or curse,
The grave that will receive you
Is Cyclopean.
I am no herald of your palaces
Nor painter of your great abyss;
I am my mother's jealous child,
And when no dreams lead me away
A traveller to distant violet lands,
I am a hand that always seems
To fasten on some fold
Of her imperial purple robe.
But now my hand opens in vain
And closes in cold space and empty,
While wolves in darkness tear
And drag the tatters of her sacred robe.

Where do you point, O Muse?
There in the distant depths? What is that day?
Your finger shows and hides what is far off.
Thunder and lightning make the Kaffir's land
Gleam far and wide.
Hymn, rise up to the stars!

Freedom, the brave one sung of Solomos,¹
Has gone on wings of winds and seabirds,
Far to a race unknown and humble;
And see, a Sparta and a Suli² blossomed there.

Then with the sunset of the age,
Hail, dawn of virgin and unknown lands!
O treasure haunted fields untouched by fame,
The greater treasure has now come to you.
Welcome the hour! For here is valor,
And here is sacrifice,
And here is glory.
Sufficient is a single heart
For giving birth to history,
A virgin fair and clothed in perfect armor.

*At the close of the year 1900,
and of the 19th century.*

¹ Dionysios Solomos, 1798–1857, the writer of the “Hymn to Liberty,” the national anthem of New Greece; he is a leading figure in Modern Greek Literature.

² Suli, a mountain district in Epirus, famous in Modern Greek History for its heroic resistance against the Turks by whom it was treacherously destroyed in 1803.

TRILOGY OF WRATH

Dedicated to the Poet and Comrade, Argyres Eftaliotes.

Che senza sdegno omai la doglia è stolta

LEOPARDI, "Sopra il monumento di Dante."

THE MONKS

WE are the men who know no work nor grace,
We live to be loud slanderers of life
Trampling on all things beautiful and true,
Crushing all flowers and blowing out all candles.

We are the haters of the sun and all
That finds delight in sunlight, love that burns
In hearts, and children's laughter; and we hide
The Gospel's living word in shrouds of death.

We are a hollow sound and out of tune
With harmonies of thunderbolts and birdsongs;
And turn gods' temples and the shining forms
Of statues into ghosts and tumbling ruins.

But now the slave has broken his old chains;
The maker turns to life again; the wise

Hails victory anew and we have fled
To hide in desert lairs and be like wolves.

And when we meet upon our lonely path
Hypatia, the star-eyed fearless thought,
We slay her, tear her into a thousand pieces,
And scatter them with rage on dusty trails.

THE SCOURGE OF ZOILUS ¹

In nature, from the fury of the sea
To the faint sound of moths, and from the mountain
To dew, in silent places and unsilenced,
Everywhere sleeps a fair elusive song.

Men of the tribe of Homer wake the song
And make it flesh, soul, light, and living star,
And speed it on its way with lyric chords;
With song the castle of the state is built,

¹ Zoilus was a Greek grammarian of Amphipolis in Macedonia, who lived about 400-320 B.C., and who is chiefly known for the acerbity of his attacks on Homer, as Homeromastix, "Scourge of Homer." His name has come to denote a spiteful and malignant critic.

And from the heart of song the law first blossomed;
The song dreams of a lyre became great deeds;
And all the glories of world-dazzling nations
Were nourished first with the sweet milk of song.

Homer is a creator and a seer
Peerless, untaught, strange, guileless, beautiful;
And in his artless world of sound divine
Legions of heroes shout triumphantly
And hearts of mothers weep; and in his word
The face of thought is written vividly,
The life of man, truth, joy, and passion, all
That you, without a care or thought, call vulgar.

Therefore you curse malignantly his song
That flows from high like mountain waters swift
And clear, you precious blossoms of decay.
And though a Homer makes you shake and tremble
Like a wind-beaten leaf upon a tree,
At Homer's shadow you grow resolute
And lash it with the scourge of Zoilus.

THE POET

Alone. Infinite emptiness about me
And a tumultuous threat of hostile shouts;
And when the threatening waves of shouts expire,
Alone, with deadly silence chilling all.
I am alone; my friends deserted me;
And prudently my brothers crept away.
One pointed at me: "There he is!" and quick
Men, women, old and young, and dogs, attacked me;
The precious hand that was till then my guide
Turned to another's love. I am alone.
Yet far in mystic distance I can see
The gleaming vision of ascetics feasting
And martyrs crowned, while flames consume my
house,
And hostile hands make fragments of my lyre.

Two ogresses work havoc on the state:
The black monk's fury and the teacher's rage.
The state has closed its gates and cast me out;
And on the lonely trail of loneliness
I wander on; and as I go, I pick

The shining fragments of the star-eyed thought
Whom they have slain. I plant them on my path;
And see, a kingdom rises here, and there
A paradise; and farther, palaces,
Temples and mighty castles dragon-guarded;
And all rejoice in one unending day.

1901.

PHEMIOS

*But the bard, the son of Terpes, escaped dark doom,
Phemios who was forced to sing among the suitors. . . .
I am self-taught; and God has planted in my heart a thousand songs. . .*
HOMER, *Odyssey*, XXII.

I MUST have sinned against some god; some great
offense

Has cast me here among you;

For I am rhythm, the pure; while you, a wave unclean
Of blindness and of rage.

Some unjust curse has cast the son of Terpes here
To bear a gloomy fate,

Mingling the sacred song of my lyre's golden strings
With your howl, breed of wolves.

And did you dream my mouth would be obedient
Slave to your revelry?

I am no little fragile boat and tremble not
Before your rocks of lies.

The king is gone; the palace glitters masterless;
Carouse on, revelers!

Yet in the palace, every corner, every hall
Speaks of Penelope;

And though you covet her and stretch your hands of
lust

To touch her, yet the gods

Stand by, her guardians, and there is peace about her

And strength that comes from stars.

And day and night, a weaver and unraveler,

She struggles at the loom

Until her king returns, the one creative joy

That ever waits for her.

And he will come some day, avenger of his queen,

To bend his mighty bow

And mercilessly make, one by one, all of you

A feast to birds of prey.

And nothing will resist the anger of his bow

But the grace of my song.

For I am royal, too; and the returning king

Will set me by his side;

And on Penelope, bent at her loom, a light

Will shine Olympian.

And far and wide even the thinnest crack will glitter

With a life-giving glow;

And while the jackals' howl will pierce the air about you,

With light and tender hands
Polymnia will lift me with triumphant song
Towards the azure day.

So in the utter darkness of the evil men
Brooding you bent over your lyre, O son of Terpes,
Phemios, prophet of a better day to come,
And wrung your hopeful song from the dark night of
sorrow

Just as with the black pitch
A master mingles colors of exceeding brightness.

1903.

HUGO'S CENTENNIAL

To Psicharis.

A HUNDRED years! O light and glory! Altar you become
Of worship; and the offerings are rich and royal;
Bring them, O chosen people of the earth; Olympian,
I offer you the valiant lyre of Rumele.¹

The soul that moans in her is simple, wise, uncon-
querable,

Made of the wrath of valiant men and of the pain
Of martyrs; and her humble songs are living melodies
Touched by the sacred breath of the eternal Homer.

Altar of worship! Yet still higher is your glory written
Upon the brows of Pyramids and Parthenons
By some soul sunsets, early dawns, and hours of perfect
sunlight,

And by the greater chronicle of centuries.

Some glowing dream of love was mated to an angel lord,
An angel with a sword of flame; and of their love,

¹ "Land of the Greeks," a term applied especially to Sterea Hellas, a center of modern Greek folk lore and legend, where many of the heroic deeds of the Revolution were performed.

You were the fruit; you came with April roses like a
birdsong

And with your hand you proved upholder of the state.

Awake, O lyres, from everywhere and sing of him and
bless him.

With rhythm you raised undreamt of magic palaces;
You proved destroyer with your word, and archer with
your verse,

Wings of the swan of Dirce with Isaiah's eyes.

Amidst all life you were the lyric echo of all things,
And beauty chose you for her harp, and truth for
trumpet;

And the great stream of harmony swept in its mighty
course

The startled crowds of idle, old, and tuneless things.

All praise to you! For you redeemed the Muse and gave
her life

When to all hearts and minds you made this judgment
known:

"Words cannot be divided into noble words and vulgar;
They all are flowers for the precious bee of thought."

All praise to you! For you have sown, and forests
thick have risen:

Ode, drama, satire, and the song of epic Muse,
And northern revel blasts of prophecy refilled the lands
Of phantasy and made them tremble with new life.

All blessing and all praise to you! For you were first
to sing

Of Missolonghi, Botsaris, Kanares, Crete,
And Greece. Hail Twenty-one,¹ and Solomos, and
Hugo's song,

O triple light upon the dawn of a new age.

I bring you clouds of lightning from the peaks of white
Parnassus,

The screaming call of eagles and wild mountain boughs
To worship at your sacred altar, O Olympian,
And to adorn the valiant lyre of Rumele.

1902.

¹ 1821 is the year of the outbreak of the War of Greek Independence. Botsaris and Kanares were among the leaders of this war. Missolonghi and Crete were made subjects of song by other poets as well as Hugo. Solomos has already been mentioned elsewhere as the poet of the Greek revolution. See page 126, note 1.

THE SONG OF THE CROSS

HE bent his holy head and died
Stretched on my dusky wood;
And stars became his nails of martyrdom;
And I gleamed whiter than the lasting snow on Lebanon.
The humble ones embraced my love
And faced me like high mountains and like Tabors;
And though the mighty of the world despised me,
I made the mighty kneel before my shadow;
And though I changed to stone all life, I raised all life
anew.

In azure spheres beyond the world, I lead
To a far mystic promised land of Canaan;
Yet here below I know three sacred fatherlands;
The first one you, whose newly lifted majesty
Proved greater than the song of your king-prophet's
harp,
Jerusalem! Solomon's temples saw and cracked;
And the white lilies of Judaea donned new glories.
Then I sought you, queen city of the Bosporus,
Vision of seven hills, and I rose higher still;

And I became the heaven's sun and Jordan's wonder;
 For Constantine, a star of light; for Heracleius
 A glory; and stood a victor over storms and Sultans.

And then I wandered to the land of peerless Athens,
 Fountain of all things beautiful and pagans' crown,
 And brought her the unknown God, and fearlessly
 I faced the war-glad Pallas in her Parthenon.
 And I conversed with tranquil gods and wove new
 crowns

Of the wild olive tree of Attica for me
 And of the laurel boughs of Hellas; and — O word
 Unheard till now — the cloud of Calvary was mingled
 With the white gleam of Homer's ever-blessed Olympus.
 And though the marble gladsome images of gods
 Beyond all care are gone, yet the ascetic's spell
 Can bind no more the earth with mystic drunkenness;
 And though in the blue space beyond, a mystic joy
 Abides, this earthly life is most worth living.
 With palm leaves, longing for some new hosannas,
 I come to you, my first, most holy fatherland,
 Jerusalem, and bring you a new song of praise
 From far away, made of the soul and voice of Hellas.

THE GREAT DREAM

*Fire and axe!**Words of Old Kolokotrones.¹*

MOTHER, I dreamed.

Something still moans within my breast; my eyes
Are dim; and I still hear and see the dream.

I saw her wander through the streets, a woman
With staring eyes; and in those eyes I saw
A faint light struggling feebly with her mind;
On her bruised body tatters hung, sore remnants
Of a queen's precious robes and ornaments;
No crown was seen to deck her head; instead,
A black line marked her forehead as with blood.
Dogs barked at her; and children of the streets
Pulled at her apron; and the passersby
Stared at her with contempt and vile desire,
The fate of wretched creatures cursed through life.

¹ One of the foremost figures of the Greek War of Independence, who, without much education, combined excellent qualities of leadership with an unusual power of terse and trenchant speech. See English translation of his memoirs "Kolokotrones, the Klepht and Warrior." . . . An autobiography translated from the Greek . . . by Mrs. Edmonds, London, T. F. Unwin, 1892.

Then all at once I saw a man before her,
Who stood upon her path like one revealed,
Suddenly risen from another world,
A prophet's likeness from Old Israel.
He stood and watched her face with rapid glance.
And as he stood, the mighty axe he held
Glittered and flashed like threatening thunderbolt
As if its fearful steel was to descend
Upon some guilty convict's evil head.
Slowly he swung the fatal instrument
And came still nearer to the startled woman:
And with a voice that burst like waterfalls
The strange and mystic herald spoke and said:

Hear you, who tremble like a leaf wind-beaten,
And lift your head with the wild fire of wrath;
For you are of the fountain head of thought
That rises now like dawn or like a sword.
You are avenging Judith, not soft woman.
I bring you this, a tool of ruin; take it
And strike with it without a sigh or tear
All things you have been taught to think as great,

Beautiful, fruitful, strong, eternal, true,
Ahead, behind, about you; strike them down
Relentlessly, without regret though they
 Have been your idols once,
 Remembering that all
 Are strange to you and naught
And that they lured you with delight to ruin,
As fairies with transparent garments lure
The unsuspecting passersby at night.
Cast the false worship of the past aside;
Like Omar burn all your ancestral books;
Tear down all wonders that the centuries
Have spared upon your Parthenons, like Elgin.
With ruthless anger strike on memory
As on a viper; and blow out the flame
Of history; and when all ancient temples
Of white and crimson marble lie in ruins
Before you and all gleaming images,
Then breathe again and shout triumphantly;
And let your song of victory resound
Like startling thunder to all loving souls.
And like a young and untamed horse that snaps

Its rein, throws down its pride, the princely rider,
And with wild neighing gallops fast away
Towards the familiar air of endless steppes,
So flee you, too, with anger as your mate,
Towards a god unknown who will be to you
Redeemer and avenger.

There beneath

The ever opened eye of heaven look
Face to face, on the sun, the charioteer,
Whose glory no shadow ever hides or dims,
And build with your own hand, a simple hut;
Then throw the axe away and take the pick;
And feeling in your heart resistless longing
For deeds, dig day and night field after field
And let the holy sweat of your fair brow
Fall like a rain of magic power to work
Its wonders on the barren earth; disperse
The flocks of evil dreams to nothingness.
Strengthen and fill your ransomed soul and heart
With the one dream: how to become the mother
Of a new age that will begin from you,

Until from the earth's hidden depths shall come
To light, like a new bride, a green oasis
Fostered and raised by you with dew and leaves
And flowers; and "Glory to Greece!" is heard once
more.

1896.

HUMBLE AND LOWLY

Dedicated to Tangopoulos, editor of the "Noumas."

DIM dreams of life that one may see as if in sleep,
To blot them and forget them when the sudden hour
Of wakening has come, elusive and unknown,
O humble ones!

Yet like the sounds of trumpets, blown by artless lips,
That pierce the ears with lusty tumult all day long,
You burst and flood all things until you reach all ears,
O lowly ones!

O lives that are the same on festive and work days,
Spent in the same secluded, lone and shaded garden,
While in your breast a deep and silent sea is heaving,
O humble ones!

O dogs that always bark at anyone unknown,
And streets filled with the treasure of the dust that
spreads
Without a flower, rough-levelled, and by thousands
trodden,
O lowly ones!

You are not riding on the steeds of daring pride,
But you kneel down resigned and bow with tearful eyes
Before Fate's judgment, be it smile or punishment,
O humble ones!

Triumphs for nothing and innumerable shouts
Of fools for little something, merry feasts of mobs,
And shadows grown to giants by the candle-light,
O lowly ones!

Though your eternal home can show no stone, there are
Flowers that grow in it with pearls of dew as crowns,
And they shall ever be your glory, first and last,
O humble ones!

Others may lavish gold and marble upon graves:
But though they may drag memory in golden chains,
Memory clings to you like a corpse pitiful,
O lowly ones!

THE DELPHIC HYMN

OF you, the world-known master of the lyre,
I will sing, son of the great Jupiter,
And the immortal words that you reveal
To all mankind, O god, from your white throne
Near the great rock crowned with eternal snow.
And I will sing of your prophetic tripod
Seized from the hissing dragon's evil claws
That clutched it savagely; I will proclaim
How with your lyric bow you struck his spotted
And writhing trunk; and how you held at bay
The host of faithless Gauls with your great prowess.

Come, offsprings of the lord of thunderbolts,
Daughters most beautiful of Jupiter,
Come from the templed woods of Helicon,
And with your songs and dances sing and praise
Your brother Phoebus of the golden hair.
For on Parnassus' double throne he stands
Amidst his Delphic festivals, and reigns
Lord of the mountain famed in prophecy.

Even in Athens, city of renown
A warlike goddess founded upon rock,
Vulcan burns on your sacred altars thighs
Of oxen, and his flames rise high and scatter
As high as great Olympus frankincense
Arabian; a thousand luring waves
Roll from sweet flutes; and melodies of praise
Spread softly from the strings of precious lyres.
The men of Athens worship you, O god.

1894.

THE OLYMPIC HYMN

To Samaras¹ who gave it wings.

ANCIENT and immortal spirit, father pure
Of all things beautiful and great and true,
Come and reveal yourself again among us
Amidst the splendor of your land and sky.

Where athletes wrestle, throw the stone, and race;
Burn in the heat of noble rivalry;
And crown their temples with unfading boughs;
And make their bodies fair and iron strong.

Meadows and seas and mountains shine with you
Like a great temple sapphire blue and white,
Luring the nations pilgrims to your shrine,
Ancient and immortal spirit, from all earth.

1895.

¹ Samaras is one of the leading composers of contemporary Greece.

FROM THE GREAT VISIONS

FROM THE GREAT VISIONS

I

THE ASCRAEAN

*. . . Hos tibi dant calamos, en accipe, Musae,
Ascraeo quos ante seni, quibus ille solebat
Cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.*

VIRGILI ECLOGA VI, 69-71.

BACK from the endless journey, from the lands
One only enters but can never leave,
I come. Again I look upon the sun
And among mortals walk. Bid me not go
Nor bid me linger, stranger, whom my eyes
Have known at a single glance. For though you see
Me near you, always distant I shall be.
My flesh is air and light; yet have no fear;
My word is flesh and lives rhythm-born like yours.
Say not my word is wonder; silent wait
And listen while my being turns again
From air to earth. Though changed by death, I am
A man. Old life-song, be my guide anew.

The blind Olympian bard, the child divine
Of Meles sings in tranquil strains of men,
Heroes, and gods; but from a restless fountain
My song flows restlessly, a song that is
The flaming lava and the surging sea.
A bard from Ascrea's fields, I am no master
Of golden dreams of calm, or radiant songs,
No! The black earth I tread, drags me with power
Magnetic; my spirit travels on the wings
Of sighs. Hills, know I am the faithful friend
Of the gentle ewe; a tiller of the soil
I furrow, sow, and sweat; I lave my song
With tears of morning dew upon the green
And with the tears of a toilsome life.
My song is loneliness; my joy, the plough;
The waves of wheatfields mingle with my rhythms.
Kings and their revels do not know my name;
Wilderness, light, the soul and night, they know it,
And you, goad-driven beasts of endless toil;
For dimly in your depths, a mystic light
Is gleaming. The cranes, too, herald forth my name;
And great trees hear it, walk, and gather near.

On my primeval land, the jackals howled,
The jackals of the wilderness amidst
My fathers' graceless lives; and graceless were
The soft-blown coastlands of Aeolia.
On open seas sailors of Cyme drove us;
On ports unknown sailors of Cyme cast us;
Here the cicala sang; the hawthorn bloomed;
And, a storm-beaten orphan, I sought rest
In laughless summers and in winters fierce
Where, at the sacred mountain's root, lay Ascrea
Darkling; from there I took this graceless voice
And harsh. My food was need and bitter care
Instead of the sweet milk of Muses' breasts.

But in the desert dale and secret, once
In daylight, as the black dreams browsed within me
And the white sheep grazed in the field about me,
There stood before my eyes nine goddesses,
Offspring of a bright world of mystery,
The Sisters dwelling upon Helicon.
Waters about and waters everywhere:
Rivers and cataracts and lakes and fountains,

Ravines and springs and gentle rivulets;
All-tranquil singers, criers thunder-voiced,
Waters that slumber wakelessly and other
Swift-flowing waters loud and revelling.
And from the water-glad green crypts and vaults
Where rocks are spanned into virgin crystal gates
Revealing sights invisible to men,
The water sprites! with minds and bodies moulded
Of cool and sunlit waters undivided;
And waters were the streaming symphonies
Of voices manifold that flowed from them.
A trumpet held the first; a lyre, the second;
The third stood ivy-crowned; the fourth was bare;
The fifth was mantled with the daystar's crimson;
The sixth — O unforgotten — clad with dawn;
The seventh wore the light of all the stars;
The eighth carried the fruit of every land;
The ninth had nothing, yet she was the greatest;
For on her shone the mind of supergods.
From them I took the laurel bough I hold,
And from their hands I ate the laurel fruit,
And knew the deeds of mortals and of gods,

And I beheld like now and yesterday
The seasons of tomorrow. Since that day,
I am the bard, the wizard, and the prophet.
A lightning quiverless, my lyre's faint glimmers
Flash forth. I am the wanderer who wanders
Forward, the laurel-eater who is filled
With hunger bitter and unquenchable;
And past the nightingales of Helicon,
Beyond earth-mother's intimate embrace,
I dream of a tenth Muse among the Muses,
In a dim world that hides beyond my thought.

Now from its husk, full ripe the corn-ear bursts;
On the grapevine, the cluster blushes red;
The fig tree spreads its green leaves to the top;
The northwind droops; the grain-ear bends to earth;
The lip, to the lover's kiss; and there the smoke
Goes writhing snake-like across the bournless sky.
Amid the oak-leaves, blithe the cuckoo sings,
And like the silence, its voice lingers on;
And nothing ends and nothing fades away.
And all seem but a delicate beginning

That knows no end. This is the hour when I
Begin anew. Blue wave, the dry land blights me;
Receive me, April calm, and May sea-dancing;
Let me drink of your cup, O water-sprite
Cymothoe; and give me your wings, sea-gulls,
Or place me among the corals of the sea.
I travelled over cross-roads ever straight
Of the wide-open world of endless waters;
I followed faithfully the wave-glad birds;
And of the firs and of the cypress trees
I took and carved them into boats and oars.
On jade-green seas, May breezes wafted me;
On murky oceans, wind-blasts drove me on;
But everywhere I found new lands with seashores.
Cymothoe, your new wine wakens sorrows old.

✓ And first I found the gold-wrought world, and came
To the gold-dwellers, and I knew the god-like.
To me, all paths, all seas, all storms, are open,
O soul within me, ever wandering;
The gold-wrought world before me rose and barred
My passage like a tranquil lake, and I

Came to the god-like dwellers of gold realms,
Whom the immortals made with joy, just as
A mighty maker free from passion makes
Other immortals — dreams of a white rock,
The breathings of his might, and images
Of his own soul. —

Tranquilly they were born,
Tranquilly blossomed, withered tranquilly.
The fathers reigned, the righteous ruled; there was
No longing, wrath, nor hatred. Earth, their slave,
Bestowed her treasures on them steadily;
There was no stooping, digging, nor pursuing;
And golden flowers grew straight upon their foot-prints,
And where they turned, they reaped a golden fruit.
Abundance was their lot. They never knew
Old age, nor pain, nor weariness, nor crime.
Blameless they lived, the blessed men, who sprang
Of sunlight, bathed in sunlight, and adorned
Their brows with crowns of sunlight. Things of thought
And things of sense, creatures and elements,
Beings and winds, water and dust, and flames,
All were for them of precious gold: gold hard,

Gold flowing, gold in gliding vapors soft,
Rising straight from the palace of the sun.
And they died not, but crossed to blessed Olympus
From Earth, just as one crosses in a bark
A river, sailing from the one green bank
To the green bank across which, although like,
Yet, in the distance, seems more low and strange.
And from their new-found dwelling of beyond,
They forgot not the other shore behind,
But always travelled back to guide and guard,
Like fleshless shadows born of airy light.

And first I found the gold-wrought world and came
To the gold-dwellers, and I knew the god-like;
But from the golden land I wandered on,
A bird that flashes tremulously by
Cutting with darkling lines the azure world,
And even in a gold-wrought world can find
No friendly roof to rest its battered wing;
And in the midst of peaceful lilt that surge
And flow from every side eternally,
It feels its heart that beats with beatings strange,

Unlike another pulse and holier,
— The beatings of a heart that is its own.

Forward I passed and reached the world of silver, ✓

Where snow-clad forests spread
Beaten by merciless and glaring moonlight
That weaves its crowns of pearl
To crown the heads of mortals wrapped in gloom,
Drunken with poppy seed,
Men whom a dimness born of mystery
Binds with life counterfeit,
A life that drags itself upon the face
Of a sheer precipice.
The shroud of the silver glow reflected wraps
All things from mind to grass,
A light that struggles to become a day
And ever stays at dawn.

“You who are neither living nor yet dead,
You whom I cannot think as dreams or lives,
And who escape the thought though eyes behold you,
You who are old and young, both flesh and shadows,
What Fury’s victims, what Tartarus’s wrecks

Are you, ill-laid upon a mother's lap
And ever wild, from your first hair, the blond,
To your last hair, snow-white. The gods far-seeing,
Even the Fates exiled from light, are far
From you from the beginning; voiceless is
The mother, who holds you voiceless with a threat.
Sorrow alone attends you mute and baneful,
Haunting your lives and never failing you.

I journey from beyond, from life; though toil
Burdens my feet, a dew empearled in grass
Has kissed them; and though storms have blown my
hair,
Traces of the caress of sunlit hours
Are visible; and when the blasts and squalls
About me rage, white swans and gold-scaled dolphins
Play in the placid lakes that spread in me.
You that are neither living nor yet dead,
Convicts in silver shrouds, give me your answer,
And speak your sorrow and complaint to me.
To your death agony, I bring the warmth
Of a true heart. I come to build anew

Your fallen temple, raise your prostrate altar,
And resurrect you with a faith that bids
You worship and bend down your knees before
Lifting you high by the immortals' side.
The quenchless sacred fire, I light again
Among you as a prayer to the gods
To raise you and redeem you from your bonds."

— "Make your feet wings! Your yard, a league
Depart,
And vanish from our sight!
Neither your altar, temple, nor your gods!
We are the godless race,
A Fury's victims, the wrecks of Tartarus,
Whose word is blasphemy.
The holy gleams on high Olympus are
Bright palaces for slayers!
Let him be master high and maker low!
Who knows this maker's name?
Though here engulfed, we think; and in our prison
We see and cry forever unto them:
The wolves cannot be gods!"

The words were still unspoken, and my eyes
Still gazed upon the world of bold deniers,
When a black cloud lowering angrily
With fiery onrush wrapped and buried them
In a vast grave of flaming lava mass;
And since then I enclose and feel in me
The ruins of a cursed world, pest-smitten.

+ /
Then I fled to the world that has sprung of brass,
Where the agents of wars and of ravages reign —
Stern violence, hatred, and wrath — and they feast
And they quaff a wine that is blood and is drawn
From brazen and measureless casks. And their minds
Are of brass, and brazen their dwellings and walls;
And brazen their weapons and brazen their breasts.
And they march ever rushing and slaying and blasting,
Ever lifting the hand to the body's harm.
And my soul, the daughter of northwind and breeze,
Swift wanderess over ethereal spheres,
Fell among things heavy and heartless and rough,
And the tameless things of a world that is wrought
Upon anvils and shaped by the hammer's stroke;

And my soul was caught and heated and beaten
In the angry gusts of the brazen flames
Like a butterfly tinged with a rusty brown.
And when Typhons joined by Cyclopes rose
With angers and slaughters, and swifter than thought
They tamed the race of the tameless men,
And when death, the vanquisher, came, on their fields
No corn-ears waved and no roses bloomed,
And no ivy blossomed on tree-trunk or fence;
But a wilderness spread with a ghastly glow,
And the threat of the thunderbolt's quivering fire.
There is something in me of the world of brass
That presses my heart with a brazen grasp;
And whenever a longing flutters towards me
There is something in me like wing-burning flames. //

Beyond the pitfalls of the evil ones,
Beyond the gardens of the innocent,
Go! Plunge into the ocean of existence!
There is the world of demigods and heroes:
Before the city of the seven gates
A trumpet peal has sounded deep;

And at the sounding trumpet peal,
The city's golden gates are creaking,
The seven gates of gold are opened!
And dreams of mighty wings and giant works
Mingle with majesty in long array;
And on the shining scales of steel breastplates,
On spears and swords,
Maddenings fierce of Gorgons and of dragons,
And Golden Fleeces, and the monstrous deeds
Of maidens Colchian
Are wide and deep engraved.
And from the well-built towers,
That gaze upon unruffled seas,
Bards sing of valiant men,
And flutes play Hymen melodies,
And the primeval witch, the ode of Orpheus
Sows souls of sapphire blue
Even upon the reefs.

In vain! The trumpet peal, the deep,
Is echoed wantonly
In the untravelled gorges;

And on the windy table-lands,
And in the lonely chasms,
The shameless Satyrs mock and dance.
Where are the dreams of deeds?
The deeds of dreams, where are they?
Deserted is the land of demigods,
The race of heroes, swept away.
And on the seven gates of gold,
And on the columns wrought of topaz,
In letters large and cast of smalt,
The traveller reads of their fate:
“We longed for laurel crowns unfading,
For the first breath that came from lips of roses;
And Ocean-born Atlantic Nymphes
And the divining words of Oedipus
Enchanted us.
The brothers’ deadly feud
Doomed us before the walls of Thebes,
A city born of sorrow.
And in the tempest raised
By seven sons of valor,
We fell!

Fate is remorseless. Fate is full of guiles.
Ill was your birth, Cadmean city, built with song!
The Greeks with lion-souls,
The Ajaxes that sweep
Like northwinds on the battlefield,
Under the walls of Troy, beset with storms,
Are lying low;
And victims moan,
And fierce avengers shout exultantly
For the enticing glance of peerless Helen!
And none has found the homeward path that leads
Where spring blooms but a moment and departs,
The land where tears are lingering.
And now, heroes or demigods, we shine
In superworlds beyond the earthly sphere;
And yet, at times, old longings trouble us,
Until our lightful shades ascend again
From the Elysian Fields of blissful joys
To write our earthly tales
With letters large and cast of smalt
Upon the seven gates of gold
And on the columns wrought of topaz."

Ah, would that I were never born nor reached
The iron-moulded world.
Where fathers hate their children; children revel
In their own fathers' death;
And brothers slaughter brothers joyfully;
And home is lair of wolves.
Sun's frightful ghost, man, breeds and wallows low
In rotten swamps of life.
For staining her, Night even curses him,
Lust-hunter, doer of wrong.
Crime is lord; violence, mistress; a bitch, the woman.
About your body pure,
Trembling you fold your raiment white, O shame,
And flee away on wings.
Ah, would that I were never born nor reached
The iron-moulded world.
Its memory pursues me like a ghost;
I dare not face its shadow.
The nights I lived in the dark world of iron,
Have marred my life, it seems,
With stains that know no healer's hand, but pierce
And creep within, sin-breeding.

And she was moulded tenderly of all
Virginhood's crowning foam, the undefiled,
A being great, remote, and light; a tower
A spirit raises among fragrant roses;
A being white, yet more than white, and gleaming;
Was it her form, her garment, or her wings?
She was the evening and the morning stars.
Rare blossoms covered her abundant hair,
Circled with flowers unculled by human hand,
That grew unwithered on her gracious head.
Sunbeams caressed her, and the breezes kissed her;
Her veil divinely dimmed her face with mist
And made her look like a statue seen among
The shining columns of a marble temple,
Or like the gleaming of a hidden god
A mortal's eye discerns behind the clouds.
Over her veil, and on her lifted head,
Glittered a golden crown, a world itself,
The living sister of a living maiden.
A wise creator with a master's art
Reaching beyond the things of nature's realm,
Carved on the crown beasts of the zodiac
And sought to breathe a soul into their signs:

And now, it seems, they seek to swallow you,
Stirred by the mistress of the golden crown;
And now, as if spellbound at her command,
The leopard dreams, and like a turtle-dove,
The bloody tiger lingers tenderly.

And in her hands, a covered basket shook,
Filled with abundant fruit, a worthy gift,
To the immortal gods. And on its sides
And on its cover, in drawings finely fitting,
Seeming the work of breath and not off hand,
All youthful loves and blossoms of the spring
Merrily danced and kissed and joined their hands;
But had I fixed my ear upon the basket,
As from the bottom of a rosy sea-shell,
Something like an unearthly witching sound
And like an ocean's roar would reach my hearing.
The garden of Dawn's Castle was the place;
The time, an hour that Fate had set apart;
And she, the god-sent blight of earth itself;
And she was called Pandora, the All-gifted.

And from the world about me, all things strong
And beautiful, which knew me as their father

And felt what I felt not, whose life I raised
To thought with my own lyre, and which could see
What I could not, blind with desire: the eagles
From aloft, and from the lowly fields, the sparrows,
The rocks, the waves, the pines, the humble sea-things,
The firs on mountain tops, the corn in fields,
Lions and waters, brambles and creeping snakes,
The whole creation, wiser than myself,
Reasonless things and speechless, spoke and reasoned;
And as I crawled toward her with open arms,
All elements cried with a tempest's cry:

“Away! Mistress of darkness is she, guileful,
Secret, and false, a plotter and a viper
Who now became a flower blossoming,
Whom demons cruel made with art divine.
God's anger sent her here to burn and blast;
And in her basket — away! away! away! —
She brings things evil, terrible, and savage,
To crush you ere your prime, O mortal man.
Locust, a lamia, a pestilence
God-sent upon the earth; her basket is

Already emptied; nothing now is left her
But the most cruel of all elements,
Whose name is Hope, sucking your blood while you
Would suck her honey. Like a thunderbolt
Fallen upon you she will burn and make
Even her empty basket but a coffin
To nail you in. And from all flowers that grow
In spring, she will but make a wreath to bind
Your pallid brow when you are dead, a corpse!"

And scornfully I heard the sacred voice
As if it were my enemy's, and fought
To drown it; kissed her footprints on the dust;
Gazed on her; and spoke to her with words of love:

"Before you, stars are mists of light and far
From stars; all beings, things by earthquakes cracked;
You are the perfect star, a whole creation.
From chaos, a world was born; and the world is you.
Of all the worlds I knew you are a part
That all the worlds have made forever one.
Youth unrenewed, and music full! Light dew

Would be a burden on your dainty flesh.
Whether your basket brings wealth-bringing gifts,
Or you have come, a giver of destruction,
Stretch out your hand but empty, O Pandora,
A source of gift or peril beyond thought."

And I surrendered to her love; and wrapped
In her embrace, I saw her, naked queen
In truth: her hands, a wild beast's claws; her beauty,
A night; and death, her every kiss; whatever
Is soul flutters away in fright; and all
That is of flesh grows monstrous, giant-like.
My song, the whinings of a sickened child;
My pure youth, pining with her stain away,
Was eaten by the filth of woman lust.
Passion unbridled dragged me on, a rider
Through narrow paths and slippery ravines;
And as I fell, it trampled me beneath
Its iron hoofs. The knife of love, the giant,
Struck me; and I decayed with quenchless longing
And perished painfully. I died and passed
Into the ice-bound world of utter darkness

To drink the water of oblivion
From the deep valley of forgotten things.

Yet even there, the night is starry; God
Reigns over all; and priceless flowers bloom.
The light of the Elysian Evening Star
Is more celestial than this; and trees
That never wither bear a golden fruit.
And above all there is Persephone,
Double and one, death's queen, life's maidenhood.
Within me roared the slaying storm of passion;
But at her feet the storm was calm and still.
And since I was beloved of Harmony,
A blessed shade was given me, a shade
To walk among the heroes and the good,
Wrapped in a mist untroubled by life's longings;
And as my shadow's soul, a lyre to hold.

I wandered on and on. I know not how
I came before her once, while I was roaming
Grief-laden in a forest towards a light
Of mystic gleam, a light of mystic gleam

That glimmered tranquilly and proved to be
Her face. And the queen made me sit beside her;
And as if memories of old subdued
Her heart, sweetly she bade me speak and sing
My sleepless verses in the night of Hades.
And then immortal harmony flowed forth
From my lyre's strings, more charming than of old:
I sang to her of the epic birth of gods,
And of its prodigies divine; and she,
Beloved one, listened as I sang and told
Of the resplendent, swift, eternal world
Of all the gods, who dwelt in rivers, lands,
Deep hollows, forests, open seas, and winds,
From the wild shakings of Briareos,
The mighty Titan, to the rosy dawn
Of the fair goddess born of laughing foam.
And a god's rapture filled and lifted me,
Maker of gods; and I believed my hands
Made it, a world I dreamed in the world of rhythm.
For when the lyre speaks to the sunlit day
Its word, the rock awakes, the tame soul swells,
The tiger ^{the} weeps, the wolf kneels down before it.

And when the lyre sings in the depths of night,
A winged flesh of light, it seems, lifts up
The shadows and brings them purer back to life;
And even Charon's boat moves on, swan-like;
And Furies' vipers turn to blooming flowers.
And when the lyre speaks in sunshine or darkness
Its word, air-demons droop grief-laden earthward,
And gods Olympian and kings infernal
Pause on their thrones, forget their majesty,
And listen spell-bound like mortals, even they.

And she, as if she sought to lay aside
Awhile the burden of the crimson robe
Of her divinity, bent and spoke to me
Human words, gathered from the self-same spring
Of flowing love and youth, and told me how
This very life of the great world that flows
And fades like a frail flower has a soul
That makes it soar above the high Olympus
With hapless man as its perfecting crown.
And she remembered when, a mortal offspring,
She lived tower-guarded in a hidden land,

Trinacria's own heart, by flowery Aetna,
And looked as if her life and flesh were formed
Of the white foam of the Adriatic Sea.
She told of the joys of April and of May,
And, one by one, explained the languages
Of birds; and showed the secrets of all flowers
From proud narcissus to humble camomile.
About us the shades, like painted images
Tormenting and tormented, pushed each other,
Listening eagerly and revelling
In melodies; and in that sacred revel
No shade knew what the goddess sang and what
The man. And like a shipwrecked mariner
Whom the sea's billows cast upon an island
At the world's edge, but who finds welcome there,
And every fruit before him at his wish,
And a people crowning him with a king's crown,
I, too, soul sorrow-laden, torn with pain,
Became a spirit. Clad with harmony,
Arrayed with light, I drank oblivion;
Healed and relieved, I felt my memory
Fading away as swiftly as a sigh.

But drowning memory, the healing spring
Opened my eyes towards new and unseen skies.
A greater memory had failed me then,
During my mortal life; I found it here,
And mingled among gods, a mortal man.

“Hail, treasure of Hades, justice to the evil,
Rest to the good, life’s victory! Here I
First knew Eurydice, with victor’s palm.
Wherever you came, fair Persephone,
A green land bloomed; and where your winged foot
Alighted, earth became a fragrant garden.
You loved narcissus, languor’s magic flower,
And longed for the fruit of the pomegranate
Artlessly; but narcissus played you false
And the fruit of the pomegranate bound you
To the stern king, who rules the realm of darkness,
Where your sweet laughter filled the Shades’ cold
hunger.
O fruit and flower, you carried as your share
Life’s spreading fragrance and pain’s sacred vase,
Making the crimson pomegranate proud

And the narcissus joyful. And although
You are a mother, still you are a maiden:
And in the death-bound space of Tartarus,
You raise with tender stirring sadness
And sorrow, longing after things unknown.
Hell is a hell when you depart from it,
Queen riding in the night's swift chariot
Towards the light, plant divine of sleep that makes
Brothers of the two worlds of life and death.
Your brow, Persephone, is sunrise self;
And at your feet, death's shadows humbly creep;
You spread your agate-woven crimson robe
From the tired evening to the dewy dawn,
And with a mother's kiss join life and death.
Before you, worlds are like a tree: and all
Its leaves wither and fall and rest upon
Your bosom. Like life-shiver of the dawn,
You spread among the laughless shades that dwell
In cold oblivion; and like a sunset
Comes your divinity to the world above,
Reminding it that dawnless night is near,
A guileless night that watches steadily.

“Yes, you I love because you live while all
Things else about you are but shades unborn
Or shades not living; and at your feet,
I lay my lyre that knows things past and future.
I love you with all my mind, with all my heart,
With all my song, O breath of all the Muses;
And above all, O empress of desire,
I love you for the new-born love in me,
For the new love that understands and pities
The world as if it were one being’s soul:
Hearts, caterpillars, mountain tops and cliffs,
Sun-withered heaths and forests green, that are
The same hand’s painting on the selfsame canvas;
I love you for the love that shines no less
On idol than on god, on small than great,
But finds divinity and excellence
In all, and prays one earnest prayer to all
In the same temple of tranquillity.
I am a friendly port for ships and shipwrecks;
And over all I bend my face with love;
Over the yawning spaces of the deep,
And over the flowers of the garden. One

Are all, one maiden's face: earth, chasms, and heavens.

I weep for all; for all I ask with love.

Not on the sands, but upon reason's rock,

I founded firm the castle of my heart.

Death was my doom, the guerdon of my rise;

And you gave me the new life of your realm."

Swift is the dawn; but swifter still there is

Within her, in the heart of the same dawn,

A moment fleet, that flashes once and then

Flickers away much swifter than a glance.

It is the blessed moment of the dew-drops

That the white lilies wear, a stainless crown,

Drops that the sun, the king, delights to kiss

Spreading his rays upon their liquid pearls,

Nor tries to drink them; so I am, a play

Of dew and sunlight in the swift and blessed

Moment of dawn. Yet morning calm still lives

Within my soul, a partner of my love;

The swift and blessed moment will not pass,

For it has taken root and grows in me.

Your song was mated to my lyre; and you

Turned my dark lot to something new and great;

And seating me at the footstep of your throne

You spoke:

“See! Spring has come and waits for me
To yoke her to my diamond chariot
That will lead us high; a queen among the swallows,
I go to visit earth and make it turn
To yearning and embraces. I shall stand
On my old verdant meadows and shall tend
With knowing hands my silken handiwork,
Peerless and decked with gold, of wondrous art,
Which I begin and never bring to end;
I place in it all worlds anew and make
Worlds like a rose; worlds like a precipice,
Worlds in their essence and no phantoms false,
The whole world at a glance of some god’s eye.

“Come, there is life. A goddess bids you follow;
Come and exult before it as before
A sacred image; pine away with all
Its pinings; find again its tears; and drink
Again its honey. Sweat as a worker sweats;
And as a wanderer, lie down upon
A rock to sleep a sleep that will not come.

And in the midst of all things be the master
Of a wide love; for you will be with me.
And you will live again with all life's trials
And all the sorrows that it brings; but willing
And free, without your seeking, you will live
This life, a demigod among the mortals.
Your song makes worlds of sounds; so come with me
A comrade in the making of my work.
This hand, though mine, may not prevail alone;
And now it summons to its aid a voice
Supreme. A wonder of art, my work may rise
Like Theban walls, perfected by the song!"

*

The charioteer, the god who is the star
Of day, looked wondrously upon the man
Returning earthward.
From the last journey, whence no man returns,
I have returned.
For from the meadows of pale asphodels
A hand has plucked me, a flower for a breast
Divine. Now let my mystic pallor shine
Upon my face, the striking pallor of

The dead. The laughter of the waveless sea,
And all the green of March are not so gentle
As my heart and mind. If I should meet Pandora,
Destruction's soul, raiser of billows black,
And glittering with sunlight, even her
I would approach in peace and bless her calmly.
For now I live not as I lived before;
Though changed and raised above all mortal things,
My heart has pity for all. Though from the world
A stranger, I am not a world-denier.
Let hills be lifted high; though the bare head
Of a light-flooded mountain touch the sky
Shadows dew-clad may mantle its green slopes.

Come, tried and humble you, redeemed and equal;
Harmony's fountain is your mouth; I know you,
O mortal! Though no god, you are no man;
You know of things immortal, and with them
You live. When my divining eyes met you,
As I was lifted from the depths again
To see the sun, I said: "My flesh and heir!"
I saw you by Calirrhoe's nine fountains;
As in the shade of a lonely olive tree

You did commune with fate, and dream, and life,
The ancient and the new; and the nine fountains,
Like the nine sisters of the nightingale,
Wakened in you a thought of music each.
The bronze bells chimed a foreign creed; about,
The ancient ruins lay in scornful silence;
Things ancient and things new, and trees, and marbles,
Things fleeting and things stable, sought a place
Within some bosom for a fitting rest.

Uncalled I came to you; my heavy lyre,
I trust you with a treasure that is priceless;
And from the wise men's scorn who know no wisdom,
I took and strengthened your tongue, the tongue I
 speak.

Your tongue is pleasant, and reveals to me
The gentle slopes of lofty mountain tops.
Within it hide deep seas unsearchable;
And in its virgin forests, nestle birds
Numberless, wild, unstained by hunters' tools.
Your tongue is pleasant; and its words delight
The dreams of nightingales and doves, they charm

Light-shadowed mortals, and they fly aloft
With winged steeds of heroes and of bards.
I heard your call, and now I come to bring
The ancient lyre to your new hands; they will
Give voice to it. For me another world
Awaits; another fate has sealed my life.
Yet earth is thirsty for the drink that is
My song. The shallow waters with sweet sounds
Clear, cool for drink, sun-gleaming, and refreshing,
Mingled with other brooks and springs, and changed
Into wide turbid streams; and they were lost
In hidden hollows and in sunless chambers;
And now they flow, a swollen river flood,
Through other distant lands.

My simple songs,
My artless words, found fire in Tartarus
And light in the Elysian fields, and back
They come. Hear them again deep, epic, great,
Touched by the mystic circles of the world
Beyond. The stammer now becomes the word;
Dew drops, a fountain head. Here is my soul;
Take it restored to life and make it yours.

II

THE CHAINS

*The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.*

MILTON.¹

*DUMB the leopard stirred
In his cage with iron bars;
And his savage form was beautiful
With the beauty of the sea-waves,
And a night with lightning flashes,
And a black night stripped of stars.*

*Stirred; and with his stirring
Arrows of unfailing archers
Shot across the space;
And he showed now storms that wrestled with the wind,
Now the rebel shrinking of a maiden
From the hands of love,
That would clasp and clasp again
In an endless play and vain.*

¹ Quoted from Satan's words, *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 253-255.

*Dumb the leopard stirred
In his cage with iron bars.
Stirred as if he never knew
Iron chains or captive's fate,
Or the humbling of the bars,
Or the tyrant tamer's rod,
Or the shouting of the mobs
That about him trod.*

*Stirred and always stirred
As in endless play and free,
Terrible with strength and blessed with grace;
And it seemed, the sky above him
Glittered with a cloudless sun;
And it seemed as if he stepped
Still upon his native land,
Island of the giant trees,
Basking in the sun;*

*Stirred and revelled still
In the heart of endless summers,
And he seemed to feed on deer
Caught in fields of languid ferns,*

*In a far spread wilderness of green,
Among crimson flames of cacti
And amidst the incensed smell
Of wild cinnamons.*

Man: From among the chosen,
I am chosen first.
From among the prison's best,
I am best of all
In my jailer's heart;
Pity me! pity me!

Some one came and some one seized me;
Some one dragged me captive here . . .
In the dark I cannot see;
"Mother, is it you? or you, my father?"
"I am Fate, the Blackman."

"What of me?"

Slave I cannot be nor will;
I am innocent and stranger."

"You were judged and bound by law."
"And my guilt?"

"That I know not."

"Where am I to go?"

"I lead you

To a prison's depths."

"For long?

Or forever?"

"I know not;

Neither last nor first you are;

So surrender."

"Take me, Fate."

Shadows tremble in the dark

While we flee; where are we going?

And we go while all things rare

And abundant spread before me

From the lofty mountain peak

To the freshness of the rose,

Like strange ghosts that pass unveiled

Sailing through a misty day.

And the world seems bound with chains

Breathing prison air.

And the prison yawned and closed;

And it was a monstrous castle

Built of marble, bronze, and gold;

And yet seemed as delicate
As a whole world's floating foam
Wrought by artisans divine,
Masters skilled and painters.

And the world from stone to thought,
Every evidence of life,
Every character of art,
Line and color, hour and cycle,
And all seasons and all lands
Made the monstrous castle.

You could never see in dream
What you saw within the castle;
Nor could you believe your eyes
Though you saw it standing plain;
Yet the castle was in chains,
All around and all around,
As the Blackman had me bound
With the iron chains.

And it stood as stands the rebel
With his hideous form relentless,
Banished from the height of heaven,

Into the dark depths of Hades,
Never stirring in the chains
That God's curse has wrought.

And it seemed the sunlit castle
Paid a heavy penalty
For God knows what monstrous crime;
And it held within its writhings
All the agonies of night;
And it was a grave.

Dampened sorrow pallid green
Dripped within and warped its walls;
And the night-bats flapped about,
And all things stood dumb and stricken;
And the chains alone
Had a living tongue.

And the chains within their metal
Kept imprisoned every sound
Till the sounds became a song,
And a tuneful symphony;
And it was the voice of chains
And it was the song of chains,
Cursed symphony.

And it was the chains that felt,
And it was the chains that spoke,
And it was the chains that grew
Like thick-rooted trees within me,
Making of my legs a trunk,
With my arms as branches.

There were chains around the castle;
And within, the chains of others
Languishing in prison air;
And amidst a whole world's bondage
I could hear my iron chains
Clank with sounds distinct.

And I whispered to my chains:
"I can hear you among all;
And your song — alas — makes discord,
Battling with the songs of others,
Like a thoughtful sad complaint
Of a strange sweet tongue.

"As all things that move and live,
From the heaven's stars to worms,
So a will transforms you, too.

Tyrants though you be, in vain;
Something new begins within you
And becomes by slow degrees,
Dawn and nightingale."

And the Blackman by my side
Stooped in thought and looked at me;
And he spoke some words unheard,
As he eased my tightened bonds;
Then he pointed to a path
And he murmured: "Walk!"

And I dragged my chains and walked:
Oh, what walls impenetrable!
And what endless tours of slaves
Shut in cells with iron bars,
Where the spider interchanges
With the ghost of fright.

And the path was just as wide
As the stretch of one man's arms;
Right and left a wall stood high;
Darkness followed at my heels;
And a gate with iron bars
Blocked my path ahead.

In the murky gloom, the sun,
Always dreamed of, slept forever;
And the sky was like an old
Half-forgotten memory
Of a glowing love-glad youth
In an old man's mind and body.

As I groped I found three lamps,
Lighted them and gave them names:
Charity and Help and Love.
And I made the darkness shine
And I saw in line a people,
Captives of the Blackman.

"Slaves, that lie in buried hollows,
Dragged with bonds of iron here
Into cold and empty caverns,
Lo, a pale ghost of a sunbeam
And a free man's ill-shaped image,
I have come, unhappy flock,
Like a mindful shepherd, bringing
Little grass with flowers mingled,
Rich with drops of dew, to you:

There, from distant depths away,
Brave redeemers fix their eyes
Upon you, like flaming torches!"

And the Blackman heard and stooped,
Watching with a thoughtful eye;
And again he whispered: "Go!"

I came to an opened courtyard
And a cooling breeze caressed
Tenderly my hair.

And I saw a bit of land
And above a stretch of turquoise;
And my hands I lifted skyward,
And I bent my knees to earth;
And I found and planted there,
Wheat and poplar tree and lily —

And the barren earth became
Garden fairer than a home
Built for newly wedded lovers;
Shadows spread suffused with light,
Light that made the shadow fair,
And the running waters bronze.

Balmy spring unfolded blossoms;
Green caresses touched my body;
And I heard the song of dawn,
As the skylark sailed the skies,
And, at evening by a briar,
Chatted to a friendly blackbird
With a yellow head.

And I breathed again and lifted
Up my hands in silent prayer,
With my will asleep.
And the Blackman saw and stooped,
Touched me softly on my shoulder
And he showed me something.

Something watching me like eyes;
Like a little mouth, it smiled;
Like a timid evening star,
Beamed and twinkled from above
On the savage solid wall;
And it was a skylight.

And I dragged my heavy chains
And my step and will

To the magnet that had charmed me
With its luring power.

And I climbed the cruel wall,
Climbed it with my hands and feet,
With the skylight as my goal.

And there was a monstrous ladder
Reaching from the ground below.
And its rungs were far apart;
Broken nails, sharp stones, and pebbles
Wore and tore my tender hands,
And my weakened feet were bleeding.

And I felt that every rung
Wrenched from me a vital part,
Spent my hope and faith and power;
And I panted, suffered, trembled,
Felt my end was drawing near,
And I climbed still on. . . .

And I reached the skylight high,
And I leaned exhausted there,
Doubly worn by chain and toil;
And with thirsty eyes I looked

Out beyond from where I lay,
Out beyond and saw:

Saw the skies without an end,
Saw the seas without a shore;
And the air was cool and lovely,
And the light was sweet with play,
And the Dawn was princess born
Of a mother queen, the Spring.

And I saw in boundless freedom
Countless hosts of azure spirits
Laugh and play like airy flowers:
And their names were innocence,
Love, and youth, and festival,
Laughing joy, and maidenhood.

And I saw from mountains high,
Images of perfect thought,
Superhuman to men's eyes,
And majestic groups of dancers
Coming down as if they stepped
Upon shining sacred stairs,
Of some royal hall or temple.

And they were the brides and bridegrooms;
And their minds were free of oaths;
And their hands were free of rings;
And they sailed away to wed
In a land where cares are dead,
And where life is God at play.

And to lily covered shores,
Swans with breezes fair and soft
Brought the white and buoyant boats;
And they landed and they climbed
Up the wondrous mountains free,
Lovely youths and maidens.

And they were on foot and horseback;
And they climbed; and all the lilies
That they reaped and held, seemed like
Holy grails of brimming nectar,
Ready to appease with bliss
Every thirst and hunger.

Doves were nestling in their arms,
Harps were hanging on their shoulders
Like long wings with honeyed murmurs;

With their hands they sowed the seed;
And the barren rocks woke up,
Wolds of green;
And the beaten trails were made
Streams of amber glow.

And the lips of men were sealed
With the guileless smile of children;
And their souls with thoughts of heroes;
And beside them bright and mighty,
Like archangels, stood their mates,
Like sky-roamers upon earth.

And about their hands and feet
And their every part grew something
More than great and made of power,
Victory, and joy. No fate
Held them captives any longer.
Only to a love divine
They would bow, a god unchained;
And they were like stuff of wings.

And I thought I was among them,
Free among the free; forgot

Blackmen, iron chains, and vultures;
And I felt my bonds like wings;
And my fate, like sunlight come
To the prison's dismal pit.

And I heard the chains that bound me
In my prison's cheerless pit
Tune their clanking to my song,
Song that spoke of victory.
And I raised my voice and spoke
From the heights where I had climbed.

And I spoke to them, the people
Who were slaves in chains below;
Prophet, painter, artisan,
I explained the mysteries
And the wonders that I saw,
And my word became a hymn;
And my chains a golden lyre.

And the chains that bound the castle,
And the chains that bound the others
Languishing behind their bars,
All made answer with a moan;

And amidst a whole world's bondage,
I could hear the whole world's chains
Clank with sounds distinct.

As in all, that stir and live
So there is a power in you,
Tyrants, chains, and fates — I feel it —
That transforms you and uplifts you
And some hand begins to bring you
Nearer to the wings of birds,
And to songs of nightingales.

1899.

A FEW MORE SONGS

A FEW MORE SONGS

MIRANDA

Admired Miranda!

Indeed the top of admiration! Worth

What's dearest to the World!

SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest*, III, 1.

ON this sea-beaten desert of the world,
A savage storm has cast me suddenly;
Give me a sheltered harbor with your help,
O cherub-like Miranda!

Give me your hand and leave me not alone;
Let Ariel's harmony become my guide;
And let all things I hear or see be tuned,
O cherub-like Miranda!

My heart is not of silver wholly pure;
Something is left in me that howls like wolves;
Banish from me the Caliban forever,
O cherub-like Miranda!

Distil in me a fragrant drop divine
Of your good father's wisdom; and become
In thought a star of never setting light,
O cherub-like Miranda!

1892.

FOR ONE WHO IS DEAD

WITH her years ablossom a beautiful girl,
And with age as his burden, a drooping grandfather
Go together to walk
In the shade of the leafy trees,
While the nightingales sing
To the ill-mated couple their ancient song.

Look not on the beautiful girl with such longing,
Wayfarer, nor touch with the wings of your mind
Her intangible grace,
O envious stranger, nor stir
With unholy words
The gladness that lightens her innocent bosom.

Let your envy alight on the old man alone
On whom daily the dawn of the maiden shines:
So the meadows forget
The storms of the furious winters,
When they bathe in the light
That abundantly flows from the beaming sun.

Where are they going, the ill-mated couple?
Are the nightingales' songs no longer the same?
"Are you digging the earth
For trees or for lilies, O pick?"
"For a girl that is dead."
So the girl goes ahead and the old man behind. . . .

Weep not for the short-lived girl, wayfarer;
She will blossom again from the earth's deep bosom,
And will shine in the world
With a lovelier beauty than this;
For the world will not end
And the bird that has fled will nestle again.

But weep for the old man whose age has been cursed
With a sorrow that burns on the verge of his grave.
Of the two *he* is dead.
He is dead, and corpse-like he gropes
In the dark and the cold,
Bereft of his sleep, and banned from his grave.

THE DAUGHTER OF LIGHTNING JOHN ¹

DEATH sudden like a thunderbolt
Descended swiftly from a cloudless sky,
And Lightning John's fair daughter fell
Struck in the heart and died.

O cypress, to your heavy shade
Her father will not come to rest,
Seeking his daughter through the world
With mourning song, O mourning tree.

The paradise of manhood holds him
Among his angel warriors,

¹ Astrapoyannos, "Lightning John," a klepht or mountain chief who flourished about the middle of the eighteenth century. He was the terror of the Turks of Salona. Mortally wounded in his last contest, he begged his aid, Lampetes, to take his head before it should become the prize of his slayers. Lampetes obeyed, and carrying the head and armor of his chief, he managed to escape the pursuing Turks until he came to a mountain shelter beyond the enemy's reach, where he buried the relics of Lightning John. Some time afterwards, Lampetes was in turn fatally wounded in another conflict; but he succeeded in dragging himself for hours to the place where he had buried his chief and died on the same spot. The daughter's death occurred after the father's tragic end. The story of Astrapoyannos is treated in a long ballad by Aristoteles Valaorites, 1824-1879, a great patriot poet who lived his poetry on battlefields and in statesmen's councils. He has had a great influence on the poetry of Modern Greece and is ranked only next to Solomos.

Among battalions of just chiefs
With klephtic songs for hymns of praise.

The song of Lightning John is light
That crowns all fighting men and shines
On Diacos and on Photinos,
Vlahavas brave, and Katsantones.¹

“O little brides of citron trees,
Flowery vines and honeysuckles,
Laurels and myrtles of sweet scent,
And maidens fair of cyclamens,

“O dawn on Pindos’ peaks slow-breaking,
And merry play among the reeds
Of the cool breezes of the spring,
And partridges and nightingales,

“All treasures of this earth that are
The joys and loves of Lightning John,
Become her pillows and her bed,
Caressing kisses for his daughter.

¹ All klephts who lived after Astrapoyánnos and were inspired by the songs that praised his deeds. The story of each of them is one of thrilling adventure, endurance, and heroism.

“And you unconquered carabines
And rifles that will be no more,
Sing loud, and let your song be incense
Over the maiden’s endless sleep.

“And you, O Lightning John’s young dreams,
Clothed with the mists of Kissavos ¹
And with the rosy robes of dawn,
Be now the dreams of her who sleeps.

“And lift her up beside her father,
Like a young dove that has been lost,
To veil with lovely glimmers white
His manhood’s star of crimson light.”

¹ A modern name for Mt. Ossa which beside Olympus and Pindos was a hiding place for klephts.

A FRAGMENT FROM "THE PARADISES"¹

AWAKE, dew at the break of day;
Awake, moon of the night; for the hours
Of April and May with their green and their roses
Are waiting for you in their sunlit robes.
Awake; in the little and sheltered harbor,
Where the silvery coast of the rocks is shining
And the green coast of gardens is seen,
A home is prepared for your coming; and near it
A boat is afloat held tight to the shore
For your welcome; and farther a snow-colored horse
Is pawing the earth for your sake. And the boat
Will take you to shore on the lonely beach
Where you'll gather lilies and shells; and the horse
Will carry you over a snake-like trail
To a vine that is loaded with red blooded clusters
Of grapes that your hands may pick. Awake!

A boy and a little girl, your playmates,
Are waiting for you by the nook that you know;

¹ Addressed to the poet's dead child. See my introduction to *Life Im-movable*, First part, pp. 33-37.

There are three sweet rose-trees in three flower-pots.
The one would squander its bloom for the boy;
The other would play with the little girl;
But the third with jealousy hides its flowers
And struggles to keep them as long as it can;
And it keeps the dew of the night away;
And it chases the honey bee; and it scorns
The tenderest kiss of the butterfly;
And for many a day and for many a night,
It waits and waits for the little hand
That never appears and never returns,
While its roses grow pale and their petals fall.
Awake! More impatient than others, two hearts
Are waiting for you. . . . two hearts that you know;
Do not ask for their names. Some sorrows are deep,
Too deep for the deepest of all lamentations.

1898.

THE MONTHS

THERE is a windy mountain far away,
Snow-capped the whole year long;

And at the mountain's foot a house stands high,
Bright like the sun's own palace.

And in the palace live twelve gallant youths,
With faces like the moon.

Old January makes love to Northwind there
And plays with ice and snow;

And February stirs up the sea and sits
Close by the Almond Tree;

And fickle March is like an angry lion,
Or like a merry swallow;

And April, crowned with flowers, leads his flocks
Out to green meadow lands;

And May and Love, his bride, go hunting hearts,
A couple blessed with light;

And June brings in his yellow sheaves of wheat,
Pearls from the fertile plain;

July, hard worker at the threshing floors,
Welters in sunny fields;

And August, with his crops, spends many nights
With his beloved moon;

September loves red grapes at vintage time
As much as girlish lips;

October, St. Demeter's month, is sweet
And full of dreamy longings;

November is St. Andrew's month, with robes
Of fallen yellow leaves;

And shivering December weeps and moans,
And always has a cold.

And each one waits his turn to spread his wings
And fly to human lands.

And each with special kindness brings to earth
A thousand precious gifts;

(But they cannot destroy the beast of pain
Nor the black cloud of evil.)

Of the twelve brothers none is loved so much
As first-born January.

For New Year's Day ¹ is his, a fairy daughter,
A queen with hands of gold.

The Fates have blessed her and her touch can turn
All humble things to stars.

And every little gift that comes from her
Is of a priceless gold.

And the black world on your swift passing smiles,
O wonder-working witch;

And for a moment seems an April rose,
A rose with petals sealed;

A rose a drop of dew might kiss full blown
Before the dawn is gone.

1890.

¹ New Year's Day is the great day for children in Greece, instead of Christmas. It is the day of gifts and sweetmeats.

ROYAL BLOSSOM ¹

*To Vlahoyannes who has dedicated one
of his tales to her.*

I AM no misty phantom nor transparent thought.
My body is like chiseled marble whole and fair
Amidst the perfect grace and beauty that surrounds it.
I grew among soft rushes on a land that shines
With the salt silver of the sea, a land whose fame
Is not more ancient than Childe Harold's pilgrim song.²
She is a bare and open land; her only ornaments
Are ferns with thorny leaves and little boats at anchor,
Broad sunset fields merged in a crimson sea of color,
And words that blossom like sweet flowers on the lips
Of women; Phidares, the stream that waters her;
And Missolonghi is her name.

And in my body
Blood, red like roses, flows consuming like a flame.
Some Lamia has fed me with the milk of life:

¹ The Greek is Triseugene which means "thrice noble"; it has a beautiful and poetic sound and it is, at the same time, a simple and familiar word. It is often used by Palamas, but it has become the despair of the translator. Triseugene seems to be here the impersonation of the speech of New Greece.

² Byron's last verses were written in Missolonghi, where he died during the War of Independence.

I am a highland lass praised among shepherd girls,
And feel as if I closed within me all new Greece;
My mirror is the shallows of the great lagoon,
And in the dead of night my eyes shine with their light
Across the silent waters like the burning fires
On a new fishing boat upon its maiden trip.
I have the fondlings of the northwest wind and look
With loving eyes on Patras bay beyond, and watch
The skies with longing for the texture of a cloud.
The Lake of Angelcastle ¹ and the Rocky Pass,²
The forests of Varassova and Zygos' slopes
Know me as maiden, fairy, and a harmless witch.
In Kleisova and Vasiladi³ I have danced,
And in their waters I have fished with a harpoon;
From dawn to dusk I live with song, am angry, love,
And hate; and like the coastlight of St. Sostes there
That lights the desert island, so I make the hills
About me shine; the flying sea-gulls call me wave;
The moonlit lake calls me a moonbeam; and I am
A woman working at the loom.

¹ Angelocastro.

² The Kleisoura of Vrahori.

³ Islets of the lagoon of Missolonghi which have become famous on account of the heroic resistance of their garrisons against the besieging forces of the Turks during the War of Independence.

The tempter's prey

I was, and sinned, and chose my bridegroom Hades.

Great? Yes! And yet — do not forget — my greatness
comes

Not from the wisdom of the wise, not steel of heroes

Nor from the prophet's voice that makes the graves fly
open

And can unroll things new and never seen before. P

My greatness comes from my own beauty that still
stands

Above all others and alone, though, like a lightning

It flashes through all hearts and is a thousand times

More beautiful than all my country's other beauties,

More beautiful than all the pearl drops of my sea. P

I am no phantom, symbol, nor an empty thought;

Agile with blood I am and beautiful with flesh;

Among all vague and shapeless things I am complete

And whole. P Only the poet's hands have made me great.

He looked at me, fell captive to my peerless beauty,

Gave me new life and clothed my form in royal purple;

And though no link connects me with the ancient things,

It seems Melpomene of old has kissed my forehead. P

At last, one day, I lighted in the heart of Athens,
Crowned with wild olive boughs and lilies from the field.
And from the empty tiers of Dionysus' temple
The poet watched my eyes that shone with prophecy
And song; and in their dreaming depths he saw re-
vealed

Tragedy fair among immortal heroines
In a still ~~distant~~ spring that some day will be here.
Only short sighted mobs look on me distantly,
Call me a fallen and strange woman and pass by.
Pass on! I am the friend of birds, and blossoms love me.

1904.

TO THE BODY

Body of man, let glory shine on you,
The shell that like an easy sailing ship
Is steel against the billows of the sea,
Endures the beating of the winds, and journeys
Through the flame revels of the sun.

Glory to you, O hands that work makes strong
As swords and mighty as the ploughs of metal;
And glory be to you, O feet that bleed,
To outspeed wings of birds, and to you, breast,
That stands like a moss-covered rock.

I praise the glitter of the eyes and face,
The power of the soul, the angry words
That loudly spring upon the human lips.
I praise the club of mighty Hercules,
The youth of fair Antinous.

I praise the body that in full daylight,
Untouched by the harpoon of unclean illness,
Dares stand in perfect nakedness and vie
With the divine repose of statues.

All glory to the body, rose of health,
A smile ethereal made tangible,
A cloud that holds a thunderbolt within it;
Spirit that is a thing instead of maker;
Let glory shine upon the body.

All glory to the body that can be
A father with the burning force of love,
Creator of fair children and of men
Who grow like lions' breed, maker of wars,
And victories and fatherlands.

1896.

LAST WORD

*“BE calm and tremble not; we are the Fates of songs;
We bring the wings of harmony to souls
In their last struggle; and across
The agonies of death,
We raise the palaces of song;
And with our kisses fragrant like sweet roses
Gently we seal the eyes to the eternal night.
To light and plant, we bring a soothing drink;
Made of the highest longing that was born
And grown within the heart, a longing
That killed all other growth,
And veiled with light all other starlight;
We bring the one most perfect longing
To little humble life that slowly dies away.
And in a diamond cup
Here is the starlit sky
For you to drink.*

*Stranger, old time has ploughed
Rough furrows on your cheeks;
You are like evening, stranger, and the snow*

*Makes silver flashes on your hair.
Stranger, your moans stir up the heart;
Stranger, your struggle rends the soul;
Which of the thousand lips that make
The witching fountain of all hymns
Shall flow for you?
What drink will quench your longing?
Is it the roaring tumult of the world
The song you wish?
Or of the songs of form Olympian
That shines immortal on Pentelic stone?
Or the green song
Of flower-studded meadows?
Song of the peaceful home,
Or song of thunder and of winds?
Song of a mountain top above all others,
Or song of heroes and of wars?
And are you thirsty for an ocean song,
Or some song of the ocean mind?
And is your longing for a song from paradise,
Or from the earth we tread?
Is it the song of life?
Or song of death?"*

*“Sing me the song sung for a thousand times,
The song of many charms,
On the old violin worn with many hands,
The violin old and honey sweet.
Sing me the care-free song of youth,
The song of hearts ablossom;
And on the violin of the twenty years
Play, Fates, to close my eyes
With strains of youth.”*

1902.

PRINTED AT
THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A.

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